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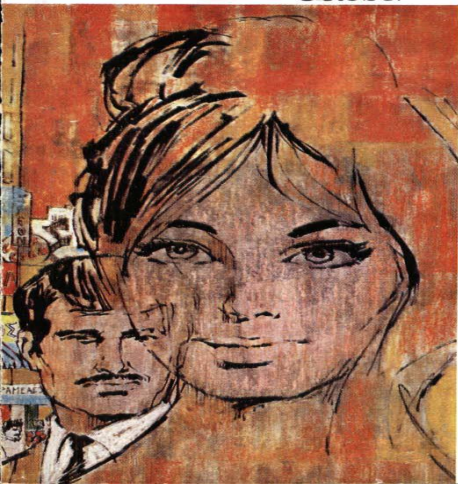

MICHAEL GILBERT

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GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD

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wooing of Ariadne

by

Harry Mark Petrakis

I KNEW from the beginning she must accept my love—put aside foolish female protestations. It is the distinction of the male to be the aggressor and the cloak of the female to lend grace to the pursuit. Aha! I am wise to these wiles.

I first saw Ariadne at a dance given by the Spartan brotherhood in the Legion Hall on Laramie Street—the usual assemblage of prune-faced and banana-bodied women smelling of virtuous anaemia. They were an outrage to a man such as myself.

Then I saw her! A tall stately woman, perhaps in her early thirties. She had firm and slender arms bare to the shoulders and a graceful neck. Her hair was black and thick and piled in a great bun at the back of her head. That grand abundance of hair attracted me at once. This modern aberration women have of chopping their hair close to the scalp and leaving it in fantastic disarray I find revolting.

I went at once to my friend Vasili, the baker, and asked him who she was.

"Ariadne Langos," he said. "Her father is Janco Langos, the grocer."

"Is she engaged or married?"

"No," he said slyly. "They say she frightens off the young men. They say she is very spirited."

"Excellent," I said and marvelled at my good fortune in finding her unpledged. "Introduce me at once."

"Marko," Vasili said with some apprehension, "do not commit anything rash."

I pushed the little man forward. "Do not worry, little friend," I said. "I am a man suddenly possessed by a vision. I must meet her at once."

We walked together across the dance floor to where my beloved stood. The closer we came the more impressive was the majestic swell of her breasts and the fine great sweep of her thighs. She towered over the insignificant apple-core women around her. Her eyes, dark and thoughtful, seemed to be restlessly searching the room.

Be patient, my dove! Marko is coming.

"Miss Ariadne," Vasili said. "This is Mr. Marko Palamas. He desires to have the honour of your acquaintance."

She looked at me for a long and piercing moment. I imagined her gauging my mighty strength by the width of my shoulders and the circumference of my arms. I felt the tips of my moustache bristle with pleasure. Finally she nodded with the barest minimum of courtesy. I was not discouraged.

"Miss Ariadne," I said, "may I have the pleasure of this dance?"

She stared at me again with her fiery eyes. I could imagine more timid men shrivelling before her fierce gaze. My heart flamed at the passion her rigid exterior concealed.

"I think not," she said.

"Don't you dance?"

Vasili gasped beside me. An old prune-face standing nearby clucked her toothless gums.

"Yes, I dance," Ariadne said coolly. "I do not wish to dance with you."

"Why?" I asked courteously.

"I do not think you heard me," she said. "I do not wish to dance with you."

Oh, the sly and lovely darling. Her subterfuge so apparent. Trying to conceal her pleasure at my interest.

"Why?" I asked again.

"I am not sure," she said. "It could be your appearance, which bears considerable resemblance to a gorilla, or your manner, which would suggest closer alliance to a pig."

"Now that you have met my family," I said engagingly, "let us dance."

"Not now," she said, and her voice rose. "Not this dance or the one after. Not tonight or tomorrow night or next month or next year. Is that clear?"

Sweet, sweet Ariadne. Ancient and eternal game of retreat and pursuit. My pulse beat more quickly.

Vasili pulled at my sleeve. He was my friend, but without the courage of a goat. I shook him off and spoke to Ariadne.

"There is a joy like fire that consumes a man's heart when he first sets eyes on his beloved," I said. "This I felt when I first saw you." My voice trembled under a mighty passion. "I swear before God from this moment that I love you."

She stared, shocked, out of her deep dark eyes and, beside her, old prune-face staggered as if she had been kicked. Then my beloved did something which proved indisputably that her passion was as intense as mine.

She doubled up her fist and struck me in the eye. A stout blow for a woman that brought a haze to my vision, but I shook my head and moved a step closer.

"I would not care," I said, "if you struck out both my eyes. I would cherish the memory of your beauty for ever."

By this time the music had stopped, and the dancers formed a circle of idiot faces about us. I paid them no attention and

ignored Vasili, who kept whining and pulling at my sleeve.

"You are crazy!" she said. "You must be mad! Remove yourself from my presence or I will tear out both your eyes and your tongue besides!"

You see! Another woman would have cried, or been frightened into silence. But my Ariadne, worthy and venerable, hurled her spirit into my teeth.

"I would like to call on your father tomorrow," I said. From the assembled dancers who watched there rose a few vagrant whispers and some rude laughter. I stared at them carefully and they hushed at once. My temper and strength of arm were well known.

Ariadne did not speak again, but in a magnificent spirit stamped from the floor. The music began, and men and women began again to dance. I permitted Vasili to pull me to a corner.

"You are insane!" he said. He wrung his withered fingers in anguish. "You assaulted her like a Turk! Her relatives will cut out your heart!"

"My intentions were honourable," I said. "I saw her and loved her and told her so." At this point I struck my fist against my chest. Poor Vasili jumped.

"But you do not court a woman that way," he said.

"*You* don't, my anaemic friend," I said. "Nor do the rest of these sheep. But I court a woman that way!"

He looked to heaven and helplessly shook his head. I waved goodbye and started for my hat and coat.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To prepare for tomorrow," I said. "In the morning I will speak to her father."

I left the hall and in the street felt the night wind cold on my flushed cheeks. My blood was inflamed. The memory of her loveliness fed fuel to the fire. For the first time I understood with a terrible clarity the driven heroes of the past performing mighty deeds in love. Paris stealing Helen in passion, and Menelaus pursuing with a great fleet. In that moment if I knew the whole world would be plunged into conflict I would have followed Ariadne to Hades.

I went to my rooms above my tavern. I could not sleep. All night I tossed in restless frenzy. I touched my eye that she had struck with her spirited hand.

Ariadne! Ariadne! my soul cried out.

In the morning I bathed and dressed carefully. I confirmed the address of Langos, the grocer, and started to his store. It

was a bright cold October morning, but I walked with spring in my step.

When I opened the door of the Langos grocery, a tiny bell rang shrilly. I stepped into the store piled with fruits and vegetables and smelling of cabbages and greens.

A stooped little old man with white bushy hair and owlish eyes came towards me. He looked as if his veins contained vegetable juice instead of blood, and if he were, in truth, the father of my beloved I marvelled at how he could have produced such a paragon of women.

"Are you Mr. Langos?"

"I am," he said, and he came closer. "I am."

"I met your daughter last night," I said. "Did she mention I was going to call?"

He shook his head sombrely.

"My daughter mentioned you," he said. "In thirty years I have never seen her in such a state of agitation. She was possessed."

"The effect on me was the same," I said. "We met for the first time last night, and I fell passionately in love."

"Incredible," the old man said.

"You wish to know something about me," I said. "My name is Marko Palamas. I am a Spartan emigrated to this country eleven years ago. I am forty-one years old. I have been a wrestler and a sailor and fought with the resistance movement in Greece in the war. For this service I was decorated by the king. I own a small but profitable tavern on Dart Street. I attend church regularly. I love your daughter."

As I finished he stepped back and bumped a rack of fruit. An orange rolled off to the floor. I bent and retrieved it to hand it to him, and he cringed as if he thought I might bounce it off his old head.

"She is a bad-tempered girl," he said. "Stubborn, impatient and spoiled. She has been the cause of considerable concern to me. All the eligible young men have been driven away by her temper and disposition."

"Poor girl," I said. "Subjected to the courting of calves and goats."

The old man blinked his owlish eyes. The front door opened and a battleship of a woman sailed in.

"Three pounds of tomatoes, Mr. Langos," she said. "I am in a hurry. Please to give me good ones. Last week two

spoiled before I had a chance to put them into Demetri's salad."

"I am very sorry," Mr. Langos said. He turned to me. "Excuse me, Mr. Poulmas."

"Palamas," I said. "Marko Palamas."

He nodded nervously. He went to wait on the battleship, and I spent a moment examining the store. Neat and small. I would not imagine he did more than hold his own. In the rear of the store there were stairs leading to what appeared to be an apartment above. My heart beat faster.

When he had bagged the tomatoes and given change, he returned to me and said, "She is also a terrible cook. She cannot fry an egg without burning it." His voice shook with woe. "She cannot make pilau or lamb with squash." He paused. "You like pilau and lamb with squash?"

"Certainly."

"You see?" he said in triumph. "She is useless in the kitchen. She is thirty years old, and I am resigned she will remain an old maid. In a way I am glad because I know she would drive some poor man to drink."

"Do not deride her to discourage me," I said. "You need have no fear that I will mistreat her or cause her unhappiness. When she is married to me she will cease being a problem to you." I paused. "It is true that I am not pretty by the foppish standards that prevail today. But I am a man. I wrestled Zahundos and pinned him two straight falls in Baltimore. A giant of a man. Afterwards he conceded he had met his master. This from Zahundos was a mighty compliment."

"I am sure," the old man said without enthusiasm. "I am sure."

He looked towards the front door as if hoping for another customer.

"Is your daughter upstairs?"

He looked startled and tugged at his apron. "Yes," he said. "I don't know. Maybe she has gone out."

"May I speak to her? Would you kindly tell her I wish to speak with her."

"You are making a mistake," the old man said. "A terrible mistake."

"No mistake," I said firmly.

The old man shuffled towards the stairs. He climbed them slowly. At the top he paused and turned the knob of the door. He rattled it again.

"It is locked," he called down. "It has never been locked before. She has locked the door."

"Knock," I said. "Knock to let her know I am here."

"I think she knows," the old man said. "I think she knows." He knocked gently.

"Knock harder," I suggested. "Perhaps she does not hear."

"I think she hears," the old man said. "I think she hears."

"Knock again," I said. "Shall I come up and knock for you?"

"No, no," the old man said quickly. He gave the door a sound kick. Then he groaned as if he might have hurt his foot.

"She does not answer," he said in a quavering voice. "I am very sorry she does not answer."

"The coy darling," I said and laughed. "If that is her game—" I started for the front door of the store.

I went out and stood on the sidewalk before the store. Above the grocery were the front windows of their apartment. I cupped my hands about my mouth.

"Ariadne!" I shouted. "Ariadne!"

The old man came out of the door running disjointedly. He looked frantically down the street.

"Are you mad?" he asked shrilly. "You will cause a riot. The police will come. You must be mad!"

"Ariadne!" I shouted. "Beloved!"

A window slammed open, and the face of Ariadne appeared above me. Her dark hair tumbled about her ears.

"Go away!" she shrieked. "Will you go away!"

"Ariadne," I said loudly. "I have come as I promised. I have spoken to your father. I wish to call on you."

"Go away!" she shrieked. "Madman! Imbecile! Go away!"

By this time a small group of people had assembled around the store and were watching curiously. The old man stood wringing his hands and uttering what sounded like small groans.

"Ariadne," I said. "I wish to call on you. Stop this nonsense and let me in."

She pushed farther out of the window and showed me her teeth.

"Be careful, beloved," I said. "You might fall."

She drew her head in quickly, and I turned then to the assembled crowd.

"A misunderstanding," I said. "Please move on."

Suddenly old Mr. Langos shrieked. A moment later something broke on the sidewalk a foot from where I stood. A vase or a plate. I looked up, and Ariadne was preparing to hurl what appeared to be a water jug.

"Ariadne!" I shouted. "Stop that!"

The water jug landed closer than the vase, and fragments of glass struck my shoes. The crowd scattered, and the old man raised his hands and wailed to heaven.

Ariadne slammed down the window.

The crowd moved in again a little closer, and somewhere among them I heard laughter. I fixed them with a cold stare and waited for some one of them to say something offensive. I would have tossed him around like sardines, but they slowly dispersed and moved on. In another moment the old man and I were alone.

I followed him into the store. He walked an awkward dance of agitation. He shut the door and peered out through the glass.

"A disgrace," he wailed. "A disgrace. The whole street will know by nightfall. A disgrace."

"A girl of heroic spirit," I said. "Will you speak to her for me? Assure her of the sincerity of my feelings. Tell her I pledge eternal love and devotion."

The old man sat down on an orange crate and weakly made his cross.

"I had hoped to see her myself," I said. "But if you promise to speak to her, I will return this evening."

"That soon?" the old man said.

"If I stayed now," I said, "it would be sooner."

"This evening," the old man said and shook his head in resignation. "This evening."

I went to my tavern for a while and set up the glasses for the evening trade. I made arrangements for Pavlakis to tend the bar in my place. Afterwards I sat alone in my apartment and read a little of majestic Pindar to ease the agitation of my heart.

Once in the mountains of Greece when I fought with the guerrillas in the last year of the war, I suffered a wound from which it seemed I would die. For days high fever raged in my body. My friends brought a priest at night secretly from one of the captive villages to read the last rites. I accepted the coming of death and was grateful for many things. For the gentleness and wisdom of my old grandfather, the loyalty

of my companions in war, the years I sailed between the wild ports of the seven seas, and the strength that flowed to me from the Spartan earth. For one thing only did I weep when it seemed I would leave life, that I had never set ablaze the world with a burning song of passion for one woman. Women I had known, pockets of pleasure that I tumbled for quick joy, but I had been denied mighty love for one woman. For that I wept.

In Ariadne I swore before God I had found my woman. I knew by the storm-lashed hurricane that swept within my body. A woman whose majesty was in harmony with the earth, who would be faithful and beloved to me as Penelope had been to Ulysses.

That evening near seven I returned to the grocery. Deep twilight had fallen across the street, and the lights in the window of the store had been dimmed. The apples and oranges and pears had been covered with brown paper for the night.

I tried the door and found it locked. I knocked on the glass, and a moment later the old man came shuffling out of the shadows and let me in.

"Good evening, Mr. Langos."

He muttered some greeting in answer. "Ariadne is not here," he said. "She is at the church. Father Marlas wishes to speak with you."

"A fine young priest," I said. "Let us go at once."

I waited on the sidewalk while the old man locked the store. We started the short walk to the church.

"A clear and ringing night," I said. "Does it not make you feel the wonder and glory of being alive?"

The old man uttered what sounded like a groan, but a truck passed on the street at that moment and I could not be sure.

At the church we entered by a side door leading to the office of Father Marlas. I knocked on the door, and when he called to us to enter we walked in.

Young Father Marlas was sitting at his desk in his black cassock and with his black goatee trim and imposing beneath his clean-shaven cheeks. Beside the desk, in a dark blue dress sat Ariadne, looking sombre and beautiful. A bald-headed, big-nosed old man with flint and fire in his eyes sat beside her.

"Good evening, Marko," Father Marlas said and smiled.

"Good evening, Father," I said.

"Mr. Langos and his daughter you have met," he said and he cleared his throat. "This is Uncle Paul Langos."

"Good evening, Uncle Paul," I said. He glared at me and did not answer. I smiled warmly at Ariadne in greeting, but she was watching the priest.

"Sit down," Father Marlas said.

I sat down across from Ariadne, and old Mr. Langos took a chair beside Uncle Paul. In this way we were arrayed in battle order as if we were opposing armies.

A long silence prevailed during which Father Marlas cleared his throat several times. I observed Ariadne closely. There were grace and poise even in the way her slim-fingered hands rested in her lap. She was a dark and lovely flower, and my pulse beat more quickly at her nearness.

"Marko," Father Marlas said finally. "Marko, I have known you well for the three years since I assumed duties in this parish. You are most regular in your devotions and very generous at the time of the Christmas and Easter offerings. Therefore, I find it hard to believe this complaint against you."

"My family are not liars!" Uncle Paul said, and he had a voice like hunks of dry hard cheese being grated.

"Of course not," Father Marlas said quickly. He smiled benevolently at Ariadne. "I only mean to say—"

"Tell him to stay away from my niece," Uncle Paul burst out.

"Excuse me, Uncle Paul," I said very politely. "Will you kindly keep out of what is not your business."

Uncle Paul looked shocked. "Not my business?" He looked from Ariadne to Father Marlas and then to his brother. "Not my business?"

"This matter concerns Ariadne and me," I said. "With outside interference it becomes more difficult."

"Not my business!" Uncle Paul said. He couldn't seem to get that through his head.

"Marko," Father Marlas said, and his composure was slightly shaken. "The family feels you are forcing your attentions upon this girl. They are concerned."

"I understand, Father!" I said. "It is natural for them to be concerned. I respect their concern. It is also natural for me to speak of love to a woman I have chosen for my wife."

"Not my business!" Uncle Paul said again, and shook his head violently.

"My daughter does not wish to become your wife," Mr. Langos said in a squeaky voice.

"That is for your daughter to say," I said courteously.

Ariadne made a sound in her throat, and we all looked at

her. Her eyes were deep and cold, and she spoke slowly and carefully as if weighing each word on a scale in her father's grocery.

"I would not marry this madman if he were one of the Twelve Apostles," she said.

"See!" Mr. Langos said in triumph.

"Not my business!" Uncle Paul snarled.

"Marko," Father Marlas said. "Try to understand."

"We will call the police!" Uncle Paul raised his voice.

"Please!" Father Marlas said. "Please!"

"Today he stood on the street outside the store," Mr. Langos said excitedly. "He made me a laughing-stock."

"If I were a younger man," Uncle Paul growled, "I would settle this without the police. Zi-ip!" He drew a callused finger violently across his throat.

"Please," Father Marlas said.

"A disgrace!" Mr. Langos said.

"An outrage!" Uncle Paul said.

"He must leave Ariadne alone!" Mr. Langos said.

"We will call the police!" Uncle Paul said.

"Silence!" Father Marlas said loudly.

With everything suddenly quiet he turned to me. His tone softened.

"Marko," he said, and he seemed to be pleading a little, "Marko, you must understand."

Suddenly a great bitterness assailed me, and anger at myself, and a terrible sadness that flowed like night through my body because I could not make them understand.

"Father," I said quietly, "I am not a fool. I am Marko Palamas and once I pinned the mighty Zahundos in Baltimore. But this battle, more important to me by far, I have lost. That which has not the grace of God is better far in silence."

I turned to leave and it would have ended there.

"Hoodlum!" Uncle Paul said. "It is time you were silent!"

I swear in that moment if he had been a younger man I would have flung him to the dome of the church. Instead I turned and spoke to them all in fire and fury.

"Listen," I said. "I feel no shame for the violence of my feelings. I am a man bred of the Spartan earth and my emotions are violent. Let those who squeak of life feel shame. Nor do I feel shame because I saw this flower and loved her. Or because I spoke at once of my love."

No-one moved or made a sound.

"We live in a dark age," I said. "An age where men say one thing and mean another. A time of dwarfs afraid of life. The days are gone when mighty Pindar sang his radiant blossoms of song. When the noble passions of men set ablaze cities, and the heroic deeds of men rang like thunder to every corner of the earth."

I spoke my final words to Ariadne. "I saw you and loved you," I said gently. "I told you of my love. This is my way —the only way I know. If this way has proved offensive to you I apologise to you alone. But understand clearly that for none of this do I feel shame."

I turned then and started to the door. I felt my heart weeping as if waves were breaking within my body.

"Marko Palamas," Ariadne said. I turned slowly. I looked at her. For the first time the warmth I was sure dwelt in her body radiated within the circles of her face. For the first time she did not look at me with her eyes like glaciers.

"Marko Palamas," she said and there was a strange moving softness in the way she spoke my name. "You may call on me tomorrow."

Uncle Paul shot out of his chair. "She is mad too!" he shouted. "He has bewitched her!"

"A disgrace!" Mr. Langos said.

"Call the police!" Uncle Paul shouted. "I'll show him if it's my business!"

"My poor daughter!" Mr. Langos wailed.

"Turk!" Uncle Paul shouted. "Robber!"

"Please!" Father Marlas said. "Please!"

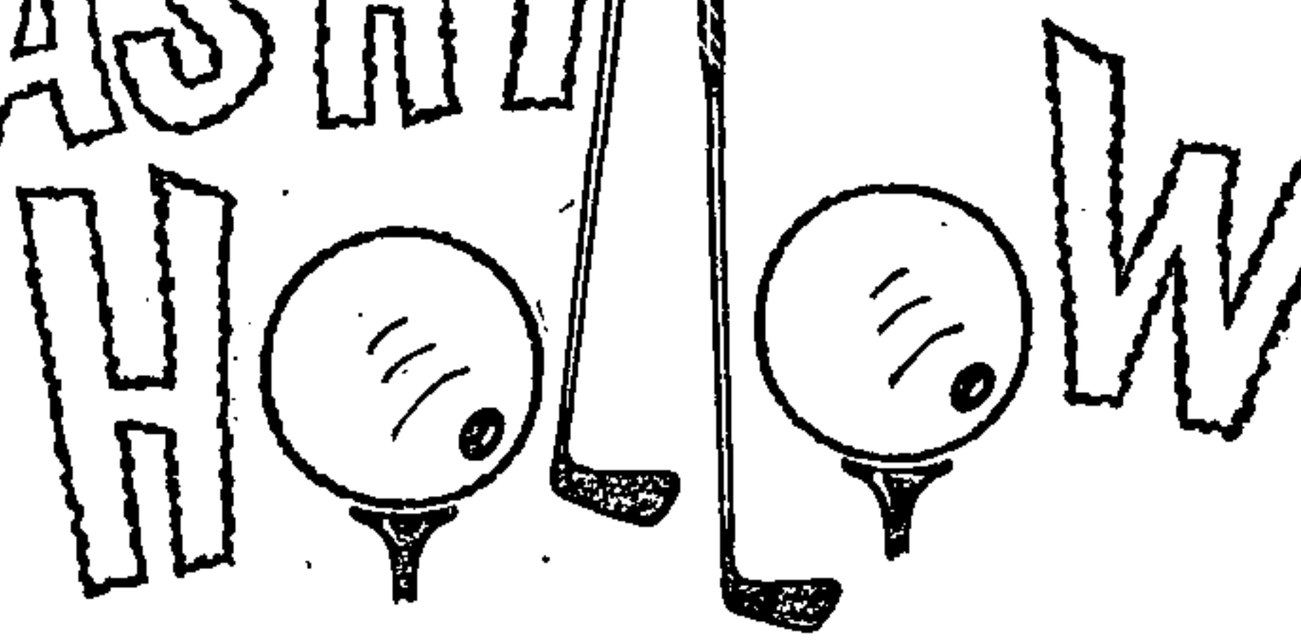
I ignored them all. In that winged and zestful moment I had eyes only for my beloved, for Ariadne, blossom of my heart and black-eyed flower of my soul!

◆ Son of a Greek-American priest, Harry Mark Petrakis is known best for his robust, earthy short stories about incurable romantics, big eaters and wild drinkers. All are heroic and most are humorous. He writes about people well—because he knows them well.

At present he lives in Chicago with his wife and three sons. When he isn't teaching classes in writing or lecturing university students, he works on his short stories or a current novel.

His latest book, *Pericles on 31st Street*, has not yet been published in Britain although it is a best-seller in the US. Argosy chose *Wooing of Ariadne* from this collection of fine short stories.

THE BATTLE OF SQUASHY HOLLOW



by P. G. WODEHOUSE

A hilarious spoof that takes the life of a young publisher to new heights—upside down

IN HIS office on the premises of Popgood and Grooly, publishers of the Book Beautiful, Cyril Grooly, the firm's junior partner, was practising putts into a tooth glass and doing rather badly even for one with a twenty-four handicap, when Patricia Binstead, Mr. Popgood's secretary, entered and, dropping his putter, he folded her in a close embrace.

This was not because all publishers are warmhearted, impulsive men and she was a very attractive girl, but because they had recently become betrothed. On his return from his summer vacation at Paradise Valley due to begin this afternoon, they would step down to the Little Church Around the Corner and become man—if you can call someone with a twenty-four handicap a man—and wife.

"A social visit?" he asked, the embrace concluded. "Or business?"

"Business. Popgood's had to go out to see a man about subsidiary rights, and Count Dracula has blown in. Well, when I say Count Dracula, I speak loosely. He just looks like him. His name is Professor Pepperidge Farmer, and he's come to sign his contract."

"He writes books?"

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"He's written one. He calls it *Hypnotism as a Device to Uncover the Unconscious Drives and Mechanism in an Effort to Analyse the Functions Involved Which Give Rise to Emotional Conflicts in the Waking State*—but the title's going to be changed to *Sleepy Time*. Popgood thinks it's snappier."

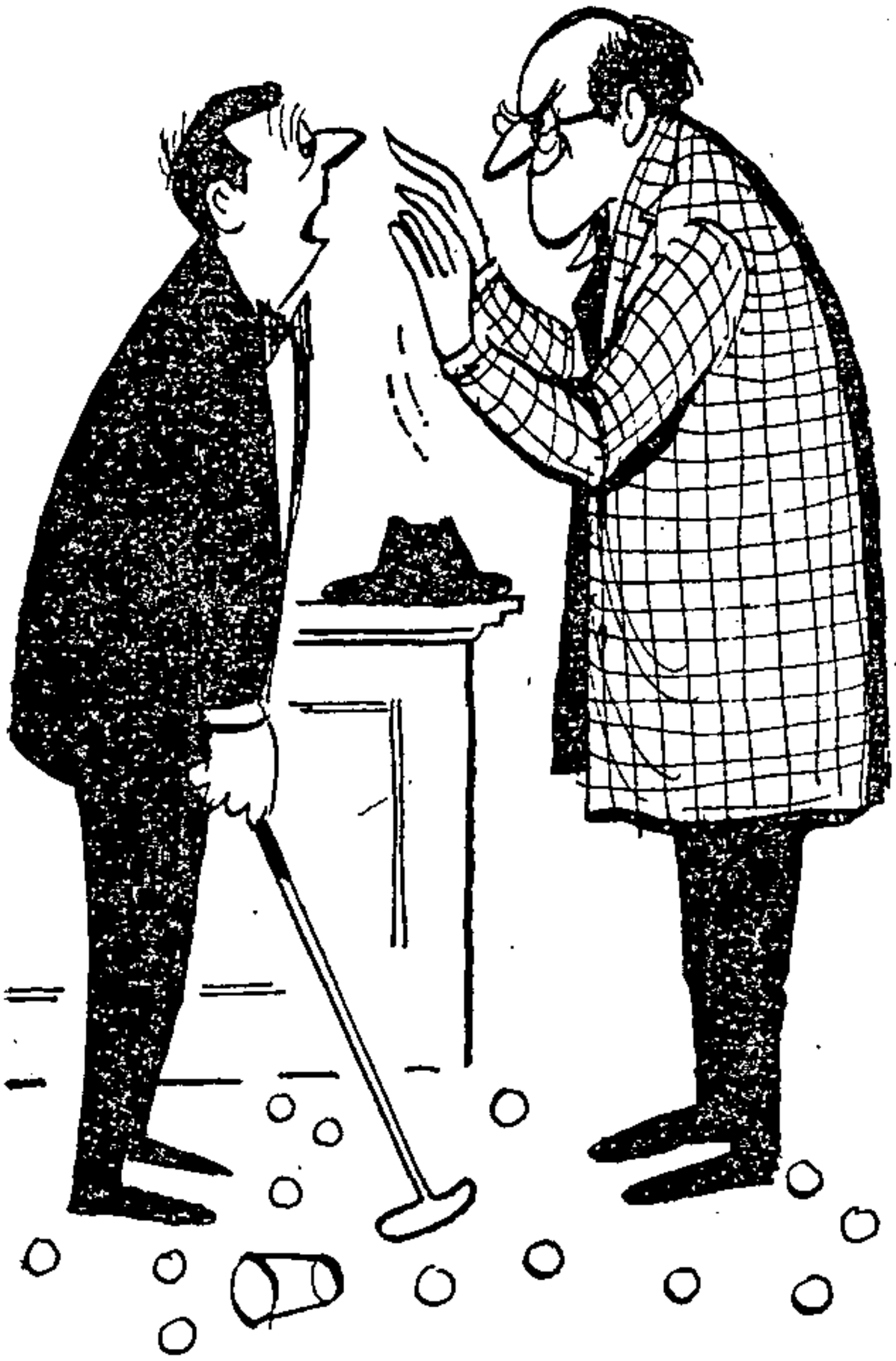
"Much snappier."

"Shall I send him in?"

"Do so, queen of my soul."

"And Popgood says be sure not to go above two hundred dollars for the advance," said Patricia, and a few moments later the visitor made his appearance.

It was an appearance, as Patricia had hinted, of a nature to chill the spine. "Sinister" was the adjective that automatically sprang to the minds of those who met Professor Pepperidge Farmer for the first time. His face was gaunt and lined and grim, and as his burning eyes bored into Cyril's, the young publisher was conscious of a feeling of relief that this encounter was not taking place down a dark alley or in some lonely spot miles deep in the country.



"Why are you waving your hands like that? You're making me sleepy . . ."

But a man accustomed to mingling with authors, few of whom look like anything on earth, is not readily intimidated, and he greeted the Professor with his customary easy courtesy.

"Come right in," he said. "You've caught me just in time. I'm off to Paradise Valley this afternoon."

"A golfing holiday?" said the Professor, eyeing the putter.

"Yes, I'm looking forward to getting in some golf."

"How is your game?"

"Horrible," Cyril was obliged to confess. "Mine is a sad and very peculiar case. I have the theory

of golf at my fingertips, but once out in the middle I do nothing but foozle."

"You should keep your head down."

"So Tommy Armour tells me, but up it comes. There's no keeping it down."

"That's life."

"Or shall we say hell?"

"If you prefer it."

"It seems more apt somehow. But now to business. Miss Binstead tells me you have come to sign your contract. I have it here. It all appears to be in order, except that the amount of the advance has not been decided on."

"And what are your views on that?"

"I was thinking of a hundred dollars. You see," said Cyril, falling smoothly into his stride, "a book like yours always involves a serious risk for the publisher owing to the absence of the sex motif, which renders it impossible for him to put a nude female of impressive vital statistics on the jacket, and no hope of getting banned in Boston. Add the growing cost of paper and the ever increasing demands of printers, compositors, binders and . . . why are you waving your hands like that?"

"I have French blood in me. On the mother's side."

"Well, I wish you wouldn't. You're making me sleepy."

"Oh, am I? How very interesting. Yes, I can see that your eyes are closing. You are becoming drowsy. You are falling asleep . . . you are falling asleep . . . asleep . . . asleep . . . asleep . . ."

It was getting on for lunchtime when Cyril awoke. When he did so, he found that the recent gargoyle was no longer with him. Odd, he felt, that the fellow should have gone before they had settled the amount of his advance, but no doubt he had remembered some appointment elsewhere. Dismissing him from his mind, Cyril resumed his putting, and soon after lunch he left for Paradise Valley.

On the subject of Paradise Valley the public-relations representative of the Paradise Hotel has expressed himself very frankly. It is, he says in his illustrated booklet, a dream world of breathtaking beauty, and its noble scenery, its wide-open spaces, its soft mountain breezes and its sun-drenched pleasances impart to the jaded city worker a new vim and vigour and fill him so full of red corpuscles that before a day has elapsed in these delightful surroundings he is conscious of a *je ne sais quoi* and a *bien-être* and goes about with his chin

up and both feet on the ground, feeling as if he had just come back from the cleaner's.

And, what is more, only a step from the hotel lies the Squashy Hollow golf course, of whose amenities residents can avail themselves on payment of a green fee.

What, however, the booklet omits to mention is that the Squashy Hollow course is one of the most difficult in the country, frequently causing disgruntled holiday-makers to describe it as a stinker. It was constructed by an exiled Scot who, probably from some deep-seated grudge against the human race, has modelled the eighteen holes on the nastiest and most repellent of his native land, so that after negotiating —say—the Alps at Prestwick, the pleasure-seeker finds himself confronted by the Station-master's Garden at St. Andrews, with the Eden and the Redan lurking ominously ahead.

The type of golfer it attracts, therefore, is the one with high ideals and an implicit confidence in his ability to overcome the toughest obstacles; the sort who plays in amateur championships and mutters to himself, "Why this strange weakness?" if he shoots worse than a seventy-five, and one look at it gave Cyril that uncomfortable feeling known to scientists as the heebie-jeebies. He had entered for the medal contest, which was to take place tomorrow, for he always entered for medal contests, never being able to forget that he had once shot a ninety-eight and that this, if repeated, would, with his handicap, give him a sporting chance of success. But the prospect of performing in front of all these hardened experts created in him the illusion that caterpillars were parading up and down his spinal cord. He shrank from exposing himself to their bleak, contemptuous stares. His emotions when he did would, he knew, be similar in almost every respect to those of a mongrel which has been rash enough to wander into the Westminster Kennel Show.

As, then, he sat on the porch of the Paradise Hotel on the morning before the contest, he was so far from being filled with *bien-être* that he could not even achieve *je ne sais quoi*, and at this moment the seal was set on his despondency by the sight of Agnes Flack.

Agnes Flack was a large young woman who on the first day of his arrival had discovered that he was a partner in a publishing firm and had immediately begun to speak of a novel which she had written and would be glad to have his opinion of when he had a little time to spare. Experience had taught him that when large young women wrote novels they were

either squashily sentimental or so frank, fearless and forthright that it would be necessary to print them on asbestos, and he had spent much of his leisure avoiding her.

She seemed now to be coming in his direction, so, rising hastily, he made on winged feet for the bar. Entering it at a rapid gallop, he collided with a solid body, and this proved on inspection to be none other than Professor Pepperidge Farmer, looking more sinister than ever in Bermuda shorts, a shirt like a sunset, and a Panama hat with a pink ribbon round it.

Cyril stood amazed. There was, of course, no reason why the other should not have been there, for the hotel was open to all whose purses were equal to the tariff, but somehow he seemed out of place, like a ghoul at a garden party or a vampire bat at a picnic.

"You!" he exclaimed. "Whatever became of you that morning?"

"You allude to our previous meeting?" said the Professor. "I saw you had dozed off, so I tiptoed out without disturbing you. I thought it would be better to resume our acquaintance in these more agreeable surroundings. For if you are thinking that my presence here is due to one of those coincidences which are so strained and inartistic, you are wrong. I came in the hope that I might be able to do something to improve your golf game. I feel I owe you a great deal."

"You do? Why?"

"We can go into that some other time. Tell me, how is the golf going? Any improvement?"

If he had hoped to receive confidences, he could not have put the question at a better moment. Cyril did not habitually bare his soul to comparative strangers, but now he found himself unable to resist the urge. It was as though the Professor's query had drawn a cork and brought all his doubts and fears and inhibitions foaming out like ginger pop from a ginger-pop bottle. As far as reticence was concerned, he might have been on a psychoanalyst's couch at fifty dollars the half hour. In burning words he spoke of the coming medal contest, stressing his qualms and the growing coldness of his feet, and the Professor listened attentively, clicking a sympathetic tongue from time to time.

It was plain that though he looked like something Charles Addams might have thought up when in the throes of a hangover—if Mr. Addams ever does have hangovers—he had a feeling heart.

"I'm paired with a fellow called Sidney McMurdo, who they tell me is the club champion, and I fear his scorn. It's going to take me at least a hundred and fifteen shots for the round, and on each of those hundred and fifteen shots Sidney McMurdo will look at me as if I were something slimy and obscene that had crawled out from under a flat stone. I shall feel like a crippled leper, and so," said Cyril, concluding his remarks, "I have decided to take my name off the list of entrants. Call me weak if you will, but I can't face it."

The Professor patted him on the shoulder in a fatherly manner and was about to speak, but before he could do so Cyril heard himself paged and was told that he was wanted on the telephone. It was some little time before he returned, and when he did the dullest eye could see that something had occurred to ruffle him.

He found Professor Farmer sipping a lemonade, and when the Professor asked him if he would care for one of the same, he thundered out a violent No.

"Blast and damn all lemonades!" he cried vehemently. "Do you know who that was on the phone? It was Popgood, my senior partner. And do you know what he said? He wanted to know what had got into me to make me sign a contract giving you five thousand dollars advance on that book of yours. He said you must have hypnotised me."

A smile, probably intended to be gentle but conveying the impression that he was suffering from some internal disorder, played over the Professor's face.

"Of course I did, my dear fellow. It was one of the ordinary business precautions an author has to take. The only way to get a decent advance from a publisher is to hypnotise him. That was what I was referring to when I said I owed you a great deal. But for you, I should never have been able to afford a holiday at a place like Paradise Valley, where even the simplest lemonade sets you back a prince's ransom. Was Popgood annoyed?"

"He was."

"Too bad. He should have been rejoicing to think that his money had been instrumental in bringing a little sunshine into a fellow creature's life. But let us forget him and return to this matter of your golfing problems."

He had said the one thing capable of diverting Cyril's thoughts from his incandescent partner. No twenty-four-handicap man is ever deaf to such an appeal.

"You told me you had all the theory of the game at your

fingertips. Is that so? Your reading has been very wide?"

"I've read every golf book that has been written," Cyril said.

"You mentioned Tommy Armour. Have you studied his preachings?"

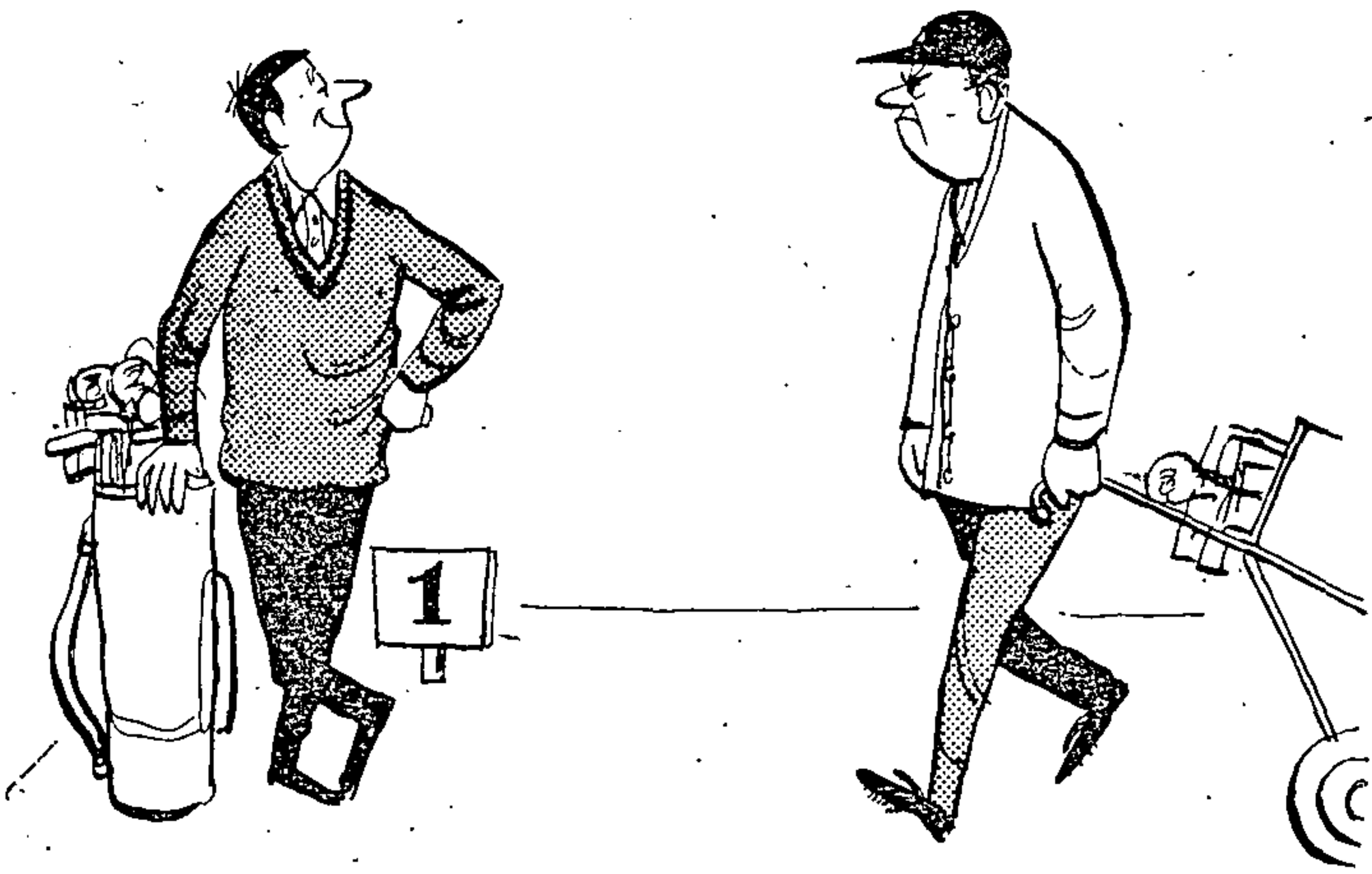
"I know them by heart."

"But lack of confidence prevents your putting them into practice?"

"I suppose that's it."

"Then the solution is simple. I must hypnotise you again. You should still be under the influence, but the effects may have worn off, and it's best to be on the safe side. I will instil into you the conviction that you can knock spots off the proudest McMurdo. When you take club in hand, it will be with the certainty that your ball is going to travel from Point A to Point B by the shortest route and will meet with no misadventures on the way. Whose game would you prefer yours to resemble? Arnold Palmer's? Ben Hogan's? Sam Snead's? Palmer's is the one I would recommend. Those spectacular finishes of his. You agree? Palmer it shall be, then. So away- we go. Your eyes are closing. You are feeling drowsy. You are falling asleep . . . asleep . . . asleep . . ."

Paradise Valley was at its best next day—its scenery just as noble, its mountain breezes just as soft, its spaces fully as wide



He was as confident as Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus all rolled into one.

and open as the public-relations man's booklet had claimed them to be; and Cyril, as he stood beside the first tee of the Squashy Hollow course awaiting Sidney McMurdo's arrival, was feeling, as he had confided to the caddy master when picking up his clubs, like a million dollars. He would indeed scarcely have been exaggerating if he had made it two million. His chin was up, both his feet were on the ground, and the red corpuscles of which the booklet had spoken coursed through his body like students rioting in Moscow, Cairo, Panama, and other centres. Professor Farmer, in assuring him that he would become as confident as Arnold Palmer, had understated it.

He was as confident as Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, and Jack Nicklaus all rolled into one.

He had not been waiting long when he beheld a vast expanse of man approaching and presumed that this must be his partner for the round. He gave him a sunny smile.

"Mr. McMurdo? How do you do? Nice day. Very pleasant, those soft mountain breezes."

The newcomer's only response was a bronchial sound such as might have been produced by an elephant taking its foot out of a swamp in a teak forest. Sidney McMurdo was in dark and sullen mood. On the previous night Agnes Flack, his fiancée, had broken their engagement owing to a trifling disagreement they had had about the novel she had written. He had said it was a lot of prune juice and advised her to burn it without delay, and she had said it was not, either, a lot of prune juice, adding that she never wanted to see or speak to him again, and this had affected him adversely. It always annoyed him when Agnes Flack broke their engagement, because it made him overswing, particularly off the tee.

He did so now, having won the honour, and was pained to see that his ball, which he had intended to go due north, was travelling nor'-nor'-east. And as he stood scowling after it, Cyril spoke.

"I wonder if you noticed what you did wrong there, Mr. McMurdo," he said in the friendliest way. "Your backswing was too long. Length of backswing does not have as much effect on distance as many believe. You should swing back only just as far as you can without losing control of the club. Control is all-important. I always take my driver to about the horizontal position on the backswing. Watch me now."

And so saying, Cyril, with effortless grace, drove two hundred and eighty yards straight down the fairway.

"See what I mean?" he said.

It was on the fourth green, after he had made an eagle, that he spoke again. Sidney McMurdo had had some difficulty in getting out of a sand trap, and Cyril hastened to give him the benefit of his advice. There was nothing in it for him except the glow that comes from doing an act of kindness, but it distressed him to see a quite promising player like McMurdo making mistakes of which a wiser head could so easily cure him.

"You did not allow for the texture of the sand," he said. "Your sand shot should differ with the texture of the sand. If it is wet, hard or shallow, your club head will not cut into it as deeply as it would into soft and shifting sand. If the sand is soft, try to dig into it about two inches behind the ball, but when it is hard, penetrate it about one and a half inches behind the ball. And since firm sand will slow down your club considerably, be sure to give your swing a full follow-through."

The game proceeded. On the twelfth Cyril warned his partner to be careful to remember to bend the knees slightly for greater flexibility throughout the swing, though—on the sixteenth—he warned against bending them too much, as this often led to topping. When both had holed out at the eighteenth, he had a word of counsel to give on the subject of putting.

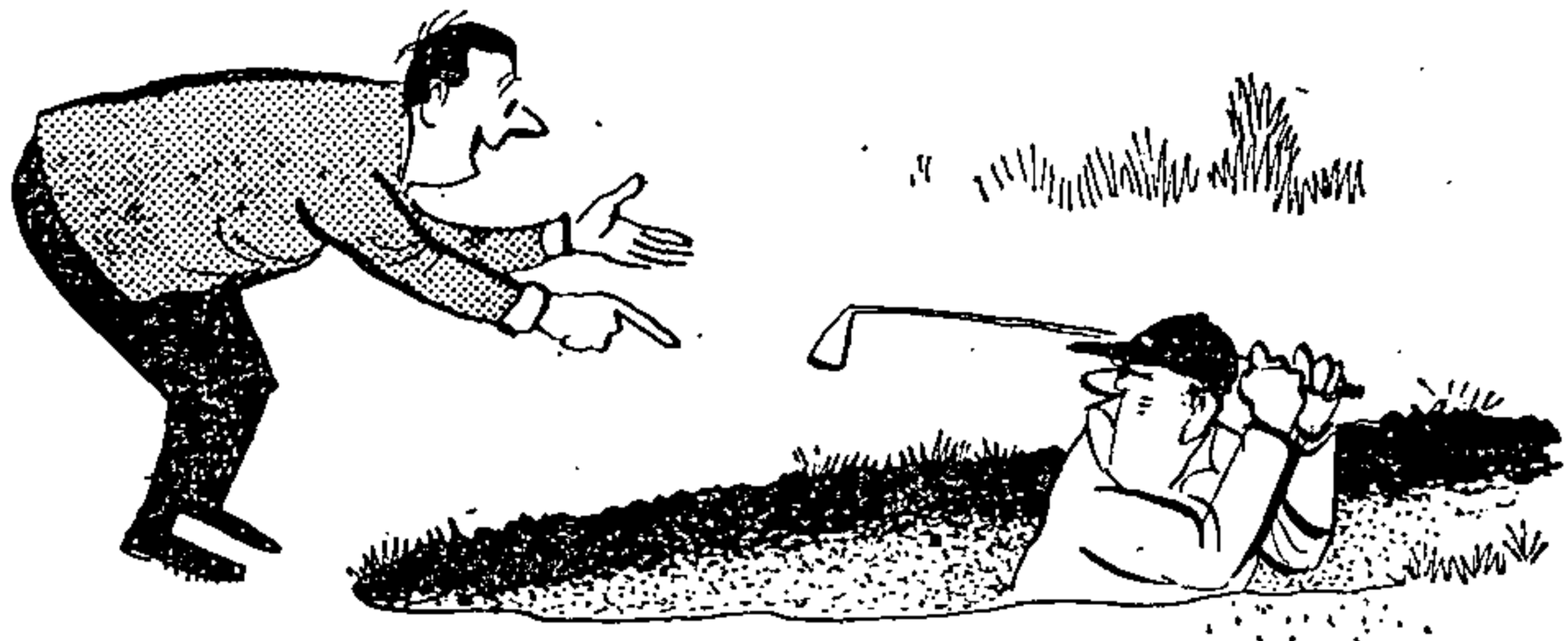
"Successful putting, Sidney," he said, for he felt that they might now consider themselves on first-name terms, "depends largely on the mental attitude. Confidence is everything. Never let anxiety make you tense. Never for an instant harbour the thought that your shot may miss. When I sank that last fifty-foot putt, I *knew* it was going in. My mind was filled with a picture of the ball following a proper line to the hole, and it is that sort of picture I should like to encourage in you. Well, it has been a most pleasant round. We must have another soon. I shot a sixty-two, did I not? I thought so. I was quite on my game today, quite on my game."

Sidney McMurdo's eyebrows, always beetling, were beetling still more darkly as he watched Cyril walking away with elastic tread. He turned to a friend who had just come up.

"Who is that fellow?" he asked hoarsely.

"His name's Grooly," said the friend. "One of the summer visitors."

"What's his handicap?"



Sidney McMurdo had had difficulty in getting out of a sand trap, and Cyril hastened to give him his advice.

"I can tell you that, for I was looking at the board this morning. It's twenty-four."

"Air!" cried Sidney McMurdo, clutching his throat. "Give me air!"

Cyril, meanwhile, had rounded the club house and was approaching the practice green that lay behind it. Someone large and female was engaged there in polishing her chip shots and as he paused to watch, he stood astounded at her virtuosity. A chip shot, he was aware, having read his Johnny Farrell, is a crisp hit with the club head stopping at the ball and not following through. "Open your stance," says the venerable Farrell, "place your weight on the left foot and hit down at the ball," and this was precisely what this substantial female was doing. Each ball she struck dropped on the green like a poached egg, and as she advanced to pick them up he saw that she was Agnes Flack.

A loud gasp escaped Cyril. The dream world of breathtaking beauty pirouetted before his eyes as if Arthur Murray were teaching it dancing in a hurry. He was conscious of strange, tumultuous emotions stirring within him. Then the mists cleared and, gazing at Agnes Flack, he knew that there before him stood his destined mate. A novelist she might be, and no doubt as ghastly a novelist as ever set finger to a typewriter key, but what of that? Quite possibly she would grow out of it in time, and in any case he felt that, as a man who went about shooting sixty-twos in medal contests, he owed it to himself to link his lot with a golfer of her calibre. Theirs would be the ideal union.

In a situation like this, no publisher hesitates. Ask any publisher; and they will tell you that hesitating is the last thing that would occur to them.

A moment later, Cyril was on the green, his arms as far around Agnes Flack as they would go.

"Old girl," he said, "you're a grand bit of work!"

Two courses were open to Agnes Flack. She could draw herself to her full height, say, "Sir!" and strike this clinging vine with her number-seven iron or, remembering that Cyril was a publisher and that she had a top copy and two carbons of a novel in her suitcase, she could co-operate and accept his addresses. She chose the latter alternative, and when Cyril suggested that they should spend the honeymoon in Scotland, playing all the famous courses there, she said that would suit her perfectly. If, as she plighted her troth, a thought of Sidney McMurdo came into her mind, it was merely the renewed conviction that he was an oaf and a fathead temperamentally incapable of recognising good literature when it was handed to him on a skewer.

These passionate scenes take it out of a man, and it is not surprising that Cyril's first move on leaving Agnes Flack should have been in the direction of the bar. Arriving there, he found Professor Farmer steeping himself, as was his custom, in lemonade. The warm weather engendered thirst, and since the Professor had come to the Paradise Hotel the drinking straw had seldom left his lips.

"Ah, Cyril, if you don't mind my calling you Cyril, though you will be the first to admit that it's a hell of a name," said the Professor, "how did everything come out?"

"Quite satisfactorily, Pepperidge. The returns are not all in, but I think I must have won the medal. I shot a sixty-two, which, subtracting my handicap, gives me a thirty-eight. I doubt if anyone will do better than thirty-eight."

"Most unlikely."

"Thirty-four under par takes a lot of beating."

"Quite a good deal. I congratulate you."

"And that's not all. I'm engaged to the most wonderful girl."

"Really? I congratulate you again. Who is she?"

"Her name is Agnes Flack."

The Professor started, dislodging a drop of lemonade from his lower lip.

"Agnes Flack?"

"Yes."

"You couldn't be mistaken in the name?"

"No."

"H'm!"

"Why do you say H'm?"

"I was thinking of Sidney McMurdo."

"How does he get into the act?"

"He is—or was—betrothed to Agnes Flack, and I am told he has rather a short way with men who get engaged to his fiancée, even if technically ex. Do you know a publisher called Pickering?"

"Harold Pickering? I've met him."

"He got engaged to Agnes Flack, and it was only by butting Sidney McMurdo in the stomach with his head and disappearing over the horizon that he was able to avoid being torn by McMurdo into little pieces.

"But for his ready resource, he would have become converted into, as one might say, a sort of publishing hash, though of course McMurdo might simply have jumped on him with spiked shoes."

It was Cyril's turn to say H'm, and he said it with a good deal of thoughtful fervour. He had parted so recently from Sidney McMurdo that he had not had time to erase from his mental retina what might be called the overall picture of him. The massive bulk of Sidney McMurdo rose before his eyes, as did the other's rippling muscles. The discovery that, in addition to possessing the physique of a gorilla, he had also that animal's easily aroused temper was not one calculated to induce a restful peace of mind. Given the choice between annoying Sidney McMurdo and stirring up a nest of hornets

. The door flew open and the bar became full of McMurdo.

with a fountain pen, he would unhesitatingly have cast his vote for the hornets.

And it was as he sat trying to think what was to be done for the best that the door flew open and the bar became full of McMurdo. He seemed to permeate its every nook and cranny. Nor had Professor Farmer erred in predicting that his mood would be edgy. His eyes blazed, his ears wiggled, and a clicking sound like the manipulation of castanets by a Spanish dancer told that he was gnashing his teeth. Except that he was not beating his chest with both fists, he resembled in every respect the gorilla to which Cyril had mentally compared him.

"Ha!" he said, sighting Cyril.

"Oh, hello, Sidney."

"Less of the Sidney!" snarled McMurdo. "I don't want a man of your kidney calling me Sidney," he went on, rather surprisingly dropping into poetry. "Agnes Flack tells me she is engaged to you."

Cyril replied nervously that there had been some informal conversation along those lines.

"She says you hugged her."

"Only a little."

"And kissed her."

"In the most respectful manner."

"In other words, you have sneaked behind my back like a slithery serpent and stolen from me the woman I love. Perhaps, if you have a moment to spare, you will step outside."

Cyril did not wish to step outside, but it seemed that there was no alternative. He preceded Sidney McMurdo through the door, and was surprised, on reaching the wide-open spaces, to find that Professor Farmer had joined the party. The Professor was regarding Sidney with that penetrating gaze of his which made him look like Boris Karloff in a peevish frame of mind.

"Might I ask you to look me in the eye for a moment, Mr. McMurdo?" he said. "Thank you. Yes, as I thought. You are drowsy. Your eyes are closing. You are falling asleep."

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are."

"By Jove, I believe you're right," said Sidney McMurdo, sinking slowly into a conveniently placed deck-chair. "Yes, I think I'll take a nap."

The Professor continued to weave arabesques in the air with his hands, and suddenly Sidney McMurdo sat up. His eye

rested on Cyril, but it was no longer the flaming eye it had been.

Almost affectionate it seemed, and when he spoke his voice was mild.

"Mr. Grooly."

"On the spot."

"I have been thinking it over, Mr. Grooly, and I have reached a decision, which, though painful, I am sure is right. It is wrong to think only of self. There are times when a man must make the great sacrifice, no matter what distress it causes him. You love Agnes Flack, Agnes loves you, and I must not come between you. Take her, Mr. Grooly. I yield her to you, yield her freely. It breaks my heart, but her happiness is all that matters. Take her, Grooly, and if a broken man's blessing is of any use to you, I give it without reserve. I think I'll go to the bar and have a gin and tonic," said Sidney McMurdo.

And proceeded to do so.

"A very happy conclusion to your afternoon's activities," said Professor Farmer as the swing door closed behind him. "I often say that there is nothing like hypnotism for straightening out these little difficulties. I thought McMurdo's speech of renunciation was very well phrased, didn't you? In perfect taste. Well, as you will now no longer have need of my services, I suppose I had better dehypnotise you. It will not be painful, just a momentary twinge," said the Professor, blowing a lemonade-charged breath in Cyril's face, and Cyril was aware of an odd feeling of having been hit by an atom bomb while making a descent in an express elevator. He found himself a little puzzled by his companion's choice of the expression "momentary twinge," but he had not leisure to go into what was, after all, a side issue. With the removal of the hypnotic spell, there had come to him the realisation of the unfortunate position in which he had placed himself, and he uttered a sharp, "Oh, golly!"

"I beg your pardon?" said the Professor.

"Listen," said Cyril, and his voice shook like a jelly in a high wind. "Does it count if you ask a girl to marry you when you're hypnotised?"

"You are speaking of Miss Flack?"

"Yes. I proposed to her on the practice green, carried away by the super-excellence of her chip shots, and I can't stand the sight of her. And, what's more, in about three weeks I'm supposed to be marrying someone else. You

remember Patricia Binstead, the girl who showed you into my office?"

"Very vividly."

"She holds the copyright. What am I to do? You couldn't go and hypnotise Agnes Flack and instil her, as you call it, with the idea that I'm the world's leading louse, could you?"

"My dear fellow, nothing easier."

"Then do it without an instant's delay," said Cyril. "Tell her I'm scratch and pretended to have a twenty-four handicap in order to win the medal. Tell her I'm sober only at the rarest intervals. Tell her I'm a Communist spy. Tell her I've two wives already. But you'll know what to say."

He waited breathlessly for the Professor's return.

"Well?" he cried.

"All washed up, my dear Cyril. I left her reunited to McMurdo. She says she wouldn't marry you if you were the last publisher on earth and wouldn't let you sponsor her novel if you begged her on bended knees."

Cyril drew a deep breath.

"Pepperidge, you're wonderful!"

"One does one's best," said the Professor modestly. "Well, now that the happy ending has been achieved, how about returning to the bar? I'll buy you a lemonade."

"Do you really like that stuff?"

"I love it."

It was on the tip of Cyril's tongue to say that one would have thought he was a man who would be more likely to share Count Dracula's preference for human blood when thirsty, but he refrained from putting the thought into words. It might, he felt, be lacking in tact, and after all, why criticise a man for looking like something out of a horror film if his heart was so patently of the purest gold?

It is the heart that matters, not the features, however unshuffled.

"I'm with you," he said. "A glass of lemonade would be most refreshing."

"They serve a very good lemonade here."

"Probably made from contented lemons."

"I shouldn't wonder," said the Professor.

He smiled a hideous smile. It had just occurred to him that if he hypnotised the waiter, he would be spared the necessity of disbursing money, always a consideration to a man of slender means.

LOUISIANA JAILHOUSE BLUES

by ERSKINE CALDWELL

A story of America's deep South chosen by Argosy from a soon-to-be published book by the author of Tobacco Road

THE time-scarred red-brick walls of the old Bogalusa city jail have been neatly plastered with cement and coated with gleaming white paint. The stately appearance of the building in the tree-shaded plaza of the Bogalusa civic centre might easily mislead a stranger in town to assume at first glance that it is either one of Louisiana's well-preserved *ante-bellum* mansions of historical importance, or else a modern motel that had been expertly designed in neo-colonial architectural style. Even the white painted iron bars over the narrow windows of the jail look as if they had been placed there as a final ornamental touch to make sure that the outward appearance of the building would be architecturally authentic in every detail.

The Bogalusa jail looks much different on the outside in the nineteen-sixties, to be sure, but on the inside the dingy grey walls and the rusty iron cages and cell blocks look the same now as they did in the early nineteen-twenties.

I ought to know, because long ago I spent nine days and nights in one of the ceiling-high cages. I was there because I had no money, no job, and was four days and four dollars behind in rent at a Bogalusa walk-up hotel across the street from the railroad tracks.

It is likely that I would have spent ninety days and nights in the Bogalusa jail, and possibly even longer than that, if I had not been befriended by a fifty-year-old blue-black Negro

trusty named Ramey Salty. Ramey said he might be too black-skinned to look like a real Gumbo, even if he did have straight hair and a French-English name, but that on the inside he felt just like an ordinary human being.

When I told Ramey how I came to be there, and without prospect of being released, he volunteered to help me get out at the risk of losing his own limited freedom. He said police were good people in some ways when they wanted to be, but that it was wrong of them to keep an eighteen-year-old white boy in jail because he owed somebody four dollars and not let him get back to college and finish his education.

Ramey Salty had been informally and unofficially sentenced to an indefinite term in jail for failing to stop making moonshine corn liquor with a homemade still in his shantytown house in the Negro quarter after several warnings by the police. He had admitted to the police that he had an uncontrollable weakness for making moonshine for himself and his friends and he himself had suggested that he be locked up in jail from dusk to dawn every night so he could keep out of trouble.

The only condition Ramey had proposed, and it was an acceptable one to the police, was that he would be permitted to leave jail during the daylight hours to work at his shoe-shining job in a barber's shop near the railway station. After two years it was still a satisfactory arrangement to both Ramey and the police.

As Ramey said about the arrangement, he was so well satisfied that he hoped he would never have to move out of jail and go back to shantytown in the Negro quarter. He said he had no wife to fuss at him for staying out at night and no house rent to pay every Saturday. There was running water and inside toilet in jail and he received two free meals of collards, fatback and cornbread every day of the week. Besides, he made enough money shining shoes at the barber's shop to pay for the clothes and tobacco he needed and to buy a pint of ready-made whisky whenever he pleased.

But there was even more to it than that. Ramey told me in confidence, after making me promise not to say a word about it to the police, that he had a secret reason for being so pleased about the arrangement he had made. His secret was that he was the only Negro in Bogalusa who could work and live in the segregated white part of the city and not have to go back to the Negro quarter to sleep at night. He said his ambition was to keep that distinction as long as he

lived and then take the secret with him to his grave without white people in Bogalusa ever realising that he had crossed their colour line.

However, Ramey Salty was unhappy about my being in jail. He had told me the first time we talked about it that a coloured man had to get used to being put in jail for little or no reason, but that he did not think it was right for the police to lock up a white boy who had been cheated out of his pay by a dishonest boss and left stranded in town without enough money to pay four dollars for room rent.

I had told Ramey about not having been paid after working for three nights selling magazine subscriptions to sawyers and papermakers in the Bogalusa lumber and pulpwood mills and that I owed four dollars at the hotel where I had been living. The owner of the walk-up hotel had locked me out of my room, taken my suitcase for non-payment of rent, and then called the police and told them that I was planning to leave town without paying what I owed him.

Ramey is dead now, more than forty years later, and I regret that I did not have an opportunity to see him again and tell him once more how grateful I was for his helping me get out of jail. Once I did send twenty dollars in a letter addressed to him care of the Bogalusa jail, but I never knew if he received it.

It is good to know, though, that Ramey Salty never lost his dawn-to-dusk freedom from jail and did succeed in maintaining his residence in the segregated white section of Bogalusa. He continued to be a trusty until he died and was buried by the police in the Negro cemetery adjoining the Bogalusa Country Club. His grave is only a chip-shot over the fence from the restricted white-only golf-course.

What had happened before I was befriended by Ramey, was that spring had come early that year to South Carolina, where I was a student, and in the first week of April, without informing my parents or leaving a forwarding address, I had packed my suitcase and gone to New Orleans. There I soon found out that shucking oysters was a specialised job that required considerable training; that stevedoring was work that was done with seasoned muscles; and that dishwashing in a French Quarter café was monotonous and confining and something easily eliminated as even a temporary trade.

A classified ad in a newspaper offered exactly the kind of position I considered suitable. Three young men and two

young women, no experience necessary, and college students preferred, were to be offered the opportunity to join an executive staff engaged in conducting a circulation campaign for a major magazine.

I was among the first applicants to knock on the crew manager's hotel door that morning in New Orleans and become one of the five new members of the executive staff. At midnight all of us got on the train to Bogalusa, a sawmill and pulpwood town on the Pearl River in Southeast Louisiana, and we were given free copies of the magazine to look at on the way. We arrived at six o'clock the next morning and got rooms on the second floor of the walk-up hotel near the railway station.

The crew manager, a blond young man who appeared to be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight and who carried a very small suitcase for what he had said would be a month of travel, told us that it was against the company policy to advance money for meals and other personal expenses. However, he promised us that the circulation campaign would begin promptly at seven o'clock that evening when the night shifts went to work at the mills and that we would begin earning commissions right away.

While sitting at the window of my room in the hotel and waiting for night to come so I could make some money for a meal, I saw the crew manager take the two girls to a café across the street for breakfast. After a while the three of them came back to the room next to mine, locked the door, and stayed there until late in the afternoon. Just before dark, after several hours of squeaking bedsprings, loud giggling, and the slam-bang of upset chairs, they left the room and went across the street again for an early dinner.

That night while the two girls entertained the shift superintendent in his office, we went through the mill selling dollar-a-year subscriptions to the magazine devoted to hunting, fishing, diagrams of home hobbies for men, and pictures of girls posing as artists' models. The crew manager, right behind us, collected the subscription orders and the money after each sale. When we finished at midnight he tore up all the subscriptions we had sold to Negroes, saying most of them could not read and none of them had any business looking at pictures of naked white girls, and told us that we would be paid the commissions we had earned—including the sales to Negroes—after he had made up his accounts in a day or two.

After three nights of the circulation campaign, and still not having settled with us, the crew manager and the two girls disappeared. The other two salesmen had enough money of their own to pay their hotel bills and buy train tickets back to New Orleans. All I had was about forty cents in nickels and dimes.

I had been in the Bogalusa jail for two days and nights when Ramey Salty said one of the jailers had told him that I would probably be charged with failure to pay the four-dollar hotel bill and be given a three-month sentence. Ramey said he had asked the jailers to let him pay the four dollars for me but that they would not accept the money from him. He was warned that he would get into serious trouble himself and might even lose the privilege of living there if he did not stop trying to help me get out of jail.

On the third day, at sundown, when Ramey came back from the barber's shop, he stopped at my cell and gave me a ham-and-cheese sandwich he had smuggled past the jailers by hiding it inside his shirt.

While I was eating the sandwich, Ramey, watching me with a pleased smile covering his wrinkled dark face, said it was the closest thing to home cooking he could smuggle into jail. For the past three days I had eaten very little of the jail meal of boiled collards, boiled fatback and soggy cornbread handed twice a day to each prisoner—white and Negro alike—in a quart-size tin bucket.

After I had thanked Ramey for the sandwich, he went to his cell and sat down on the bunk. He was too far away for me to be able to see what he was doing. but presently he left his cell, which the jailers never bothered to lock, and came back to my cell with his hand pressing against something else inside his shirt. Coming close to the bars, he handed me a sheet of paper, an envelope, and the stub of a pencil he had collected. I could see some of the other prisoners watching us through the bars of their cells, but none of them said anything.

Whispering to me in order to keep the jailer in the front room from hearing him and becoming suspicious, Ramey told me what he wanted me to do. He said he knew I had parents or relatives somewhere and that he was sure I would be kept in jail for the next three months or even longer if I did not write to somebody who would be able to help me get released. He told me that it would do no good at all to give the jailers

a letter to mail, because he had seen them open letters other prisoners had written and then, after reading the letters, throw them into the wastebasket.

The lights in the cell room had been turned off for the night and it would be morning before I could see well enough to write a letter. And by then Ramey would have left for the day and be unable to mail the letter for me. He did not want to waste a whole day getting my letter into the mail, and he told me to write it as soon as there was enough light in the morning. Then I was to climb to the top of the cell and look out of the window for a small coloured boy who would be playing in the weeds behind the jail.

Ramey said all I had to do then was to whistle to the boy and drop the letter through the bars. He said the boy would take the letter to him at the barber's shop and then he would take care of everything else after that.

I asked Ramey why he was trying to help me the way he was doing, since there were ten or twelve of us in jail and he offered no help to the others. He said everybody else ought to be kept where they were, because they had been jailed for stealing or knifing or doing something else just as bad, and that the only reason I was there was because I had been cheated and could not pay the four dollars I owed.

That was when I told him about some other Negroes I had known—Bisco in Georgia and Sonny in Tennessee and Troy in Mississippi—and Ramey said he believed in friendship among the races and wished there could be more of it.

When Ramey came back to the jailhouse at his usual time at the end of the day, he told me that the letter I had dropped through the window that morning had been stamped and mailed and that he was sure something good would happen within a few days. After a while he admitted that something had gone wrong in the beginning but that everything had worked out all right in the end. What had happened was that the coloured boy who took my letter was not the one Ramey had sent. However, he had found out who the boy was and got the letter back and then had mailed it himself.

In the afternoon of the fifth day after Ramey had mailed the letter, one of the jailers unlocked my cell door and told me I was free to leave. I had written the letter to my father in Georgia and I expected to see him waiting for me. Instead, the secretary of the Bogalusa YMCA introduced himself and said that my father had telegraphed money for the hotel bill and a train ticket to Atlanta.

When we got to the YMCA, I took a shower, changed clothes—the secretary had already paid the four-dollar hotel bill and got my suitcase—and then I ate a meal of something other than collards, fatback and cornbread for the first time in nine days.

On the way to the railway station to take the train to Birmingham, and from there to Atlanta, I told the secretary I wanted to stop at the barber's shop and see Ramey Salty before I left Bogalusa and thank him for all he had done for me. While I was eating dinner at the YMCA, I had told the secretary that Ramey urged me to write the letter and then mailed it for me.

The secretary shook his head emphatically and said it would be better if I left town without seeing Ramey. Then he told me that the police were trying to find out how I had smuggled a letter out of jail and that they suspected Ramey of having mailed it for me. He said Bogalusa was a small town and that if I were seen talking to Ramey at the barber's shop, the police would be certain to find out about it and would probably take away his privileges. I knew that if that happened he would have to leave jail and go back to the Negro quarter to live.

I left Bogalusa without seeing Ramey Salty again . . .

Knowing how much he wanted to live on the white side of town, I was sure thereafter that it was a favour Ramey would appreciate more than any other thing I could have done for him.

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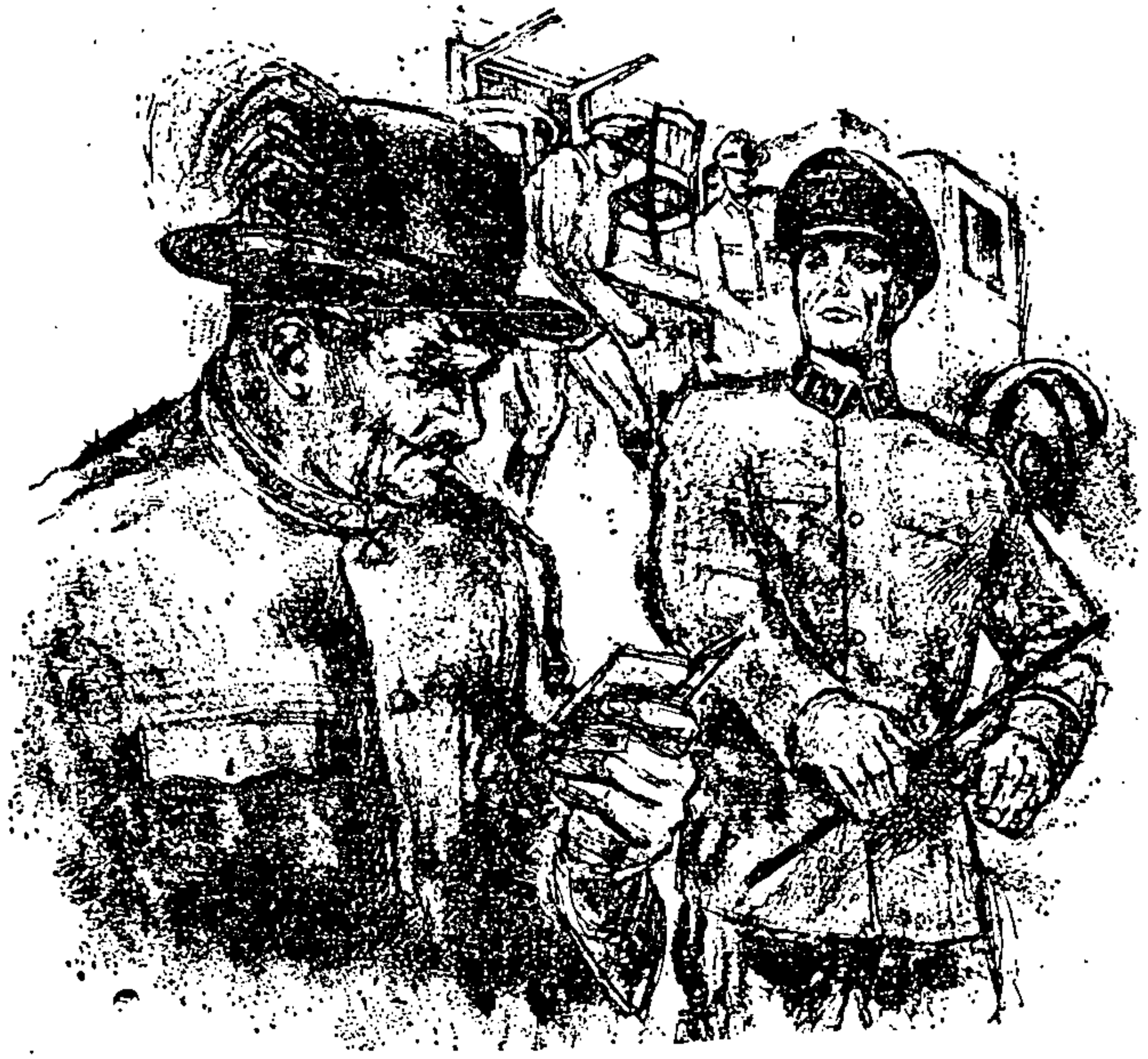
ANSWERS TO THE FILM QUIZ ON PAGE 103

1. (c).
2. *Deep Blue Sea; Separate Tables; The Winslow Boy; The VIPs; The Browning Version; Final Test.*
3. *The Jazz Singer.*
4. Seven: *The Road to—Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, Rio, Bali* and *Hong Kong.*
5. (b). 6. *My Fair Lady.*
7. Cecil B. de Mille.
8. Dirk Bogarde; James Fox; Sarah Miles.
9. *This Sporting Life.* 10. Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly.
11. (a) and (e); (b) and (f); (c) and (d).
12. Honor Blackman; Shirley Eaton; Tania Mallet.
13. Ray Milland. 14. John and Hayley Mills.
15. *The Magnificent Seven.*

Tell these men to go away



by GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD

MISS TITTERTON was so ashamed of being put inside—as she believed it was now called—and so uneasily certain that she must have committed an offence that it was very difficult to persuade her she was not a criminal. Even the Family could never quite restore her faith in herself.

In the nineteenth century the Family—Miss Titterton always pronounced the word with a coronet over the capital F—owned some five hundred square miles of Hungarian soil; by the twentieth, this inheritance had been reduced to fifty. Neither chaperons nor husbands could control the females, and no race course, marriage, cabaret or casino was safe from the males. The only hope for the future of the Family and its estates was, their lawyers said—and the Emperor graciously

For her, police

were like plumbers—

necessary but

required for unpleasant

emergencies only

supported the recommendation—an English governess who could inculcate a sense of discipline into the infant generation during the formative years.

The choice fell upon Ellen Titterton. Not for a moment did she feel unworthy, but she could not explain it. She had no connections with Nobility or Higher Clergy, and was far too truthful to claim anything but humble birth and a sound education. Though she was never allowed to suspect it, her appointment was simply due to the fact that she had been the fourth candidate to be interviewed. Her prospective employer, the Countess, had languidly remarked that, whether or not English governesses had the inhuman virtues ascribed to them, they were a dying fashion, and nobody could possibly be expected to endure conversing with more than three of them in quick succession.

Miss Titterton settled into the nursery wing, and was immediately adored by her charges. She had never, my dears, felt the necessity for any harsh discipline. At any rate she trained the characters of two generations of the Family with such success that they could without effort appear imperturbably British: a quality which in later life impressed their bank managers and allowed a presumption of innocence in such divorces as were sadly unavoidable.

When Ellen Titterton was sixty-five, the Family, who all

loved a generous gesture, pensioned her off and presented to her a gay, distinguished, little doll's house just off the main street of their market town. She had as well enough savings of her own—she never seemed to spend any money except on felicitous presents to the children—to impress local society with her independence, and she earned a trifle of income by giving delicately efficient English lessons.

She was slim, straight, respected and as reasonable as ever. She had no special enthusiasms. She did not occupy herself unduly with priests or pets or worthy causes, content to contribute the graces of etiquette to her little circle of maiden aunts and majors' widows. She read and recommended; she played the piano well; she left the proper cards upon her friends on all the correct occasions. The society which Miss Titterton ornamented was exactly that for which Providence and a Victorian girlhood had prepared her. She was also grateful to Providence for a basic training in languages which allowed her to speak Hungarian with hardly any accent.

In 1938 the Family saw what was coming and removed themselves to London. They could not persuade the beloved nursery governess to accompany them. At her age, she insisted, she did not choose to be uprooted. As she had always told the children, when one has made one's bed one must lie on it.

Her confidence was justified. Nobody thought of interning her when Hungary entered the war on the German side—or, if anybody did, the proposal was rejected as a waste of time and money. She continued to live her miniature social life and comforted herself by the thought that there was no quarrel between her two countries. It was a mere accident of diplomacy that Hungary had become an enemy nation. The Germans are so self-willed, my dear, though very musical of course.

When German base units were stationed in the little town, the social decencies were eased for her by her friends. Should some veteran German officer be invited to coffee, it was understood that Ellen Titterton must be warned. If, in spite of this, she came face to face with the enemy her dignified bow was a satisfaction to all concerned. It apologised so exquisitely for the fact that international differences prevented any personal relations.

The Germans found great difficulty, Miss Titterton said, in distinguishing between allied and conquered territory; she would have thought it could have been explained to them.

So she was puzzled—but still charitable—when a German army truck, half loaded with furniture, called at her house. Out of it stepped an officer and six SS men.

The officer saluted and asked if he might be permitted to inspect the house. Miss Titterton realised that the visit was official, not social, and that her distant bow would be out of place. She followed the high, black boots from room to room and back to the front door. There, on her own doorstep, she was bluntly informed that, since the only occupants of the house were herself and her little dainty-aproned servant, she did not need more than two bedrooms. No doubt she would be glad to make a free gift of the furniture of the other to some suffering family in the Ruhr which had been bombed out.

Miss Titterton did not approve of this method of collection. Giving to the Hungarian troops she understood—and to hospitals, bazaars—all the scores of war charities. Very willingly she played her tiny part, for after all the Hungarians were not in action against British troops. Even if they had been, it would have made no difference to her pity.

She replied to the demand that she was very sorry, but she could not give up her furniture. That third bedroom, unused and spotless, was specially dear. It was the dream of her retirement that some day one of the Family would come to stay with her.

The officer showed his army authority—German army—to remove furniture—Hungarian furniture—and regretted that he had no alternative. He ordered two men up the stairs. They seemed to Miss Titterton rather brutal and large, but she reminded herself that removal men had so much heavy lifting to do. All the same, she was outraged. She took the rational but extraordinary step of telephoning to the town police for protection.

The Family could never find out what had happened at the other end of the line. The police, who knew all about the Herrenvolk's requisitioning, could only recommend prompt obedience. Why they took any action at all was beyond conjecture. It may have been that they wondered if the SS was being impersonated by some band of ordinary, less efficient criminals; it may have been that they were just weary of being ignored. Whatever the reason, Sergeant Bacso, sword, pistol, moustache and all, paced round the corner of the main street and halted in front of Miss Titterton's house.

The dressing-table had got as far as the front door. It could go no farther, since Ellen Titterton, drawn up to her

full height, was standing in the doorway. She neither protested nor fluttered. To get the furniture out, she herself would first have had to be removed to the army truck, stiff and dignified as a piece of Victorian teak.

Sergeant Bacso was also of an older generation. He and Miss Titterton knew of each other's existence and reputation, but had had no dealings together. For Miss Titterton police were like plumbers—necessary and useful but required only in unpleasant emergencies. For the sergeant she was part of a closed world to which emergencies must not be allowed to happen. That at first was the only common ground.

The Family knew Bacso well—far from a hero and not the sort of man to interfere with his own comfort. He was gorgeous, bumbling, incoherent and harmless as an old turkey cock. He gobbled at Miss Titterton and Hitler's SS while he recovered from the shock of this forcible collection of gifts.

The sergeant was not at all the modern policeman with a probation order in one hand and a tax demand in the other. He did not think of himself as representing the arbitrary benevolence of the State; he was just the protector of the haves, however humble, against the have-nots. Not a very worthy ideal. But, such as it was, it absolutely prevented him from pointing out quietly to Miss Titterton that a private individual should not argue with the SS. For Sergeant Bacso property was property.

He drew out his notebook and formally asked Miss Titterton whether she was or was not willing to present the furniture of one bedroom to the Reich. She replied decidedly that she was not. He took down her statement, closed his notebook.

The SS men were grinning at him as if he were a circus clown in policeman's uniform. He had a wide open escape-route from the deadlock if he merely pointed out that Miss Titterton was British and that he washed his hands of her. The family doubted if it ever occurred to him. He was used to thinking of her as one of the town's old ladies. The only officials likely to remember her nationality off-hand were those of the former British Legation where she appeared once a year for the party on the King's Birthday in some astonishing confection twenty years out of date.

Having decided that his customer's complaint was justified, Sergeant Bacso pulled his splendid moustache and awaited an invitation to act. He got it.

"Sergeant, is it not your duty to tell these men to go away?"

It was a gentle inquiry rather than a command. But there

was no disobeying. Miss Titterton had developed her confident manner through taking over two generations of spoilt children from dear old peasant Nannies who—regrettably but so very naturally—had no idea at all of discipline. Her voice was sufficient. Unlike the SS she had never been compelled to use corporal punishment.

Sergeant Bacso settled his plumed hat on his head and joined Miss Titterton at the front door. What really bothered him was not so much standing up to a detachment of the most conscienceless thugs in the German Army as giving orders to an officer.

He saluted and apologised with every second sentence, but he was firm. Miss Titterton's furniture could not be requisitioned without payment, and it was not going to leave her house until he had referred the matter to his superiors.

By this time a small crowd had gathered. They probably did not cheer, but looked as if they wanted to. The two SS men who were still carrying the dressing-table put it down. Their comrades stood by the truck, lounging and contemptuously interested. The unconscious arrogance of an old lady and a town policeman had surpassed their own.

The officer called them to attention and began to storm at Bacso. The foaming, emphatic German was a little too fast for the sergeant, but not for Miss Titterton—though there were words the meaning of which she preferred to ignore. She stopped the flow with a slight gesture of her hand and remarked that in the great days of the German Army the officers she met were always gentlemen. Women had been slung across the street for less. But Miss Titterton's rebukes were always unanswerable. That phrase *the great days* made any violent retort extremely difficult.

The SS were almost about to climb into their truck and visit other free contributors. Afterwards, of course, they would have returned and had the furniture of the whole house off her. But for the moment they were on the defensive. They were back in school with the copybook maxims of truth, courage and good manners.

Sergeant Bacso, triumphant and peaceable, invited his country's allies to accompany him to the police station; he meant that he was only too willing to refer the question of Miss Titterton's bedroom to higher authority if they would be good enough to come with him. But the SS officer, ready for any excuse to reimpose himself on the situation, pretended to believe that the sergeant was threatening arrest. He nodded

to his bullies around the truck who intimidatingly strolled forward.

Bacso, in a noble access of Magyar defiance, drew his pistol. The illusion of civic law and order was destroyed. By resorting to violence he immediately removed himself from the fantastic world which Miss Titterton had created.

It could easily have been his last act; but the Herrenvolk, relieved of unwelcome memories of civilisation and back in their familiar environment, decided that he and his pop-gun were merely comic. They disarmed him and, according to Ellen Titterton, deprived him of his nether garments. She was reluctant to give details. Good manners were as needful as always, even if you young people chose to call them inhibitions. It appeared that the SS detachment had hustled Bacso round the corner and launched him into the main street by a kick on the bare backside. He had the sympathy of the whole town, but it was recognised that he never would get over the humiliation, never be so polished again.

Miss Titterton's respectability, too, was gravely compromised. The police came for her at once, and the local magistrate with them. In spite of being a distant cousin of the Family and a frequent visitor—a highly-strung little boy, she remembered, who had been so unnecessarily afraid of the dark—he would not hold any conversation with her and would not listen. He bundled her off to his court and promptly gaoled her for insulting glorious allies and creating a disturbance.

A common gaol it had been, among common criminals. She had been very glad to see how well the poor women were treated. She was sure that she had been allowed no special privileges beyond permission to decorate her cell with curtains and chintz covers and to invite selected prisoners to coffee. Their moral education had been sadly neglected, and she hoped that her influence on them had been for the good.

Miss Titterton felt that it was very forgiving of the Family to rescue her and fly her back to London immediately after the war. When they explained to her that prison had been the only way of preserving her from a quite certain concentration camp and the very possible attentions of the Gestapo, she tried hard to believe them. But in her experience, she said, justice was always done. She was afraid it stood to reason that she had deserved her sentence—perhaps for not taking enough care with the unruly member, my dear. It was very kind of them all to accept her disgrace so light-heartedly.

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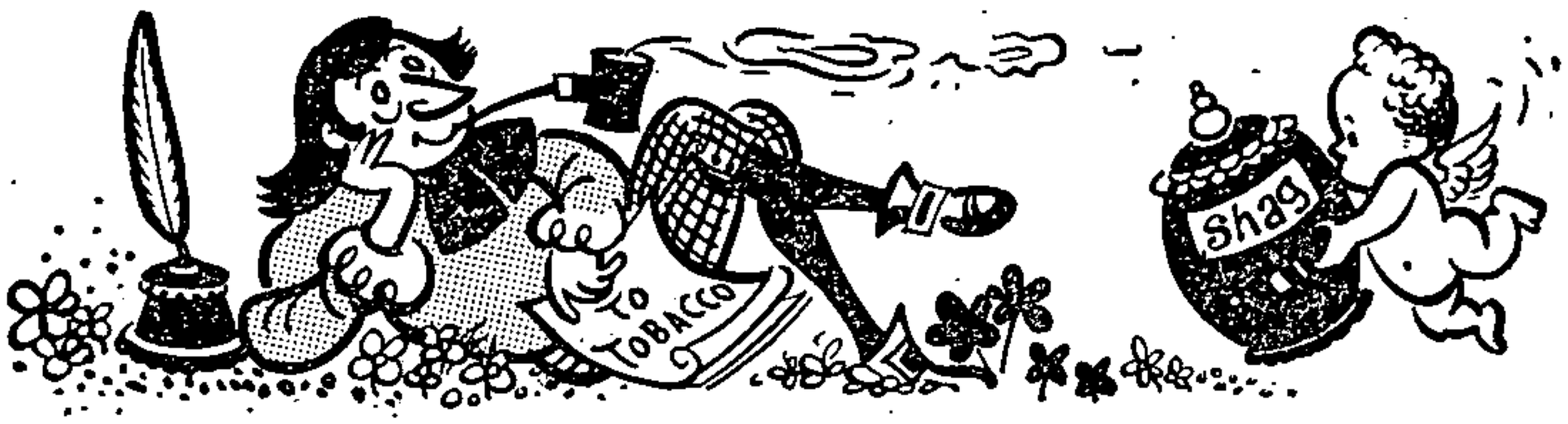


SMOKE RINGS

How tobacco doth too much fill my thoughts, and selfe denial about such a stinkinge thing might do well . . .

HENRY NEWCOMBE, *Presbyterian Minister, 1662*

If you are so unfortunate as to have contracted the low habit of smoking, be careful to practise it under certain restrictions; at least, so long as you are desirous of being considered fit for civilised society.

The first mark of a gentleman is a sensitive regard for the feelings of others; therefore, smoke where it is least likely to prove personally offensive by making your clothes smell; then wash your mouth, and brush your teeth. What man of delicacy could presume to address a lady with his breath smelling of onions? Yet tobacco is equally odious. The tobacco smoker, in *public*, is the most selfish animal imaginable; he perseveres in contaminating the pure and fragrant air, careless whom he annoys, and is but the fitting inmate of a tavern.

Smoking in the streets, or in a theatre, is only practised by shop-boys, pseudo-fashionables—and the *Swell Mob*.

ANON, *Hints on Etiquette and The Usages of Society, With a Glance at Bad Habits, 1834*

Havana!

Some sigh for this or that;
My wishes don't go far;
The world may wag at will,
So I have my cigar.

THOMAS HOOD

Firebrand

If fellows must smoke, let them retire into a remote smoking-den, wash, be shampooed and change all their clothes, before they dare to mix in general society. Of course, the smoking tribe will call me a milksop, an old "crank" with abnormal olfactories and so forth... If I am a "crank," I can only say that fifty years ago gentlemen, as a rule, must have been "cranks," for they used to regard a man who habitually smoked everywhere and anywhere, in mixed society and in association with ladies, as a dirty brute.

As to women smoking, I cannot bring myself to speak...

FREDERIC HARRISON, *1905*

Soothing Weed

O precious, sweet beguiling fag
I long to have thee in my bag
For when I have thee not, I nag
My friends and family.
With every mild consoling puff
Thou makest life a lot less tough
And though my throat gets red and rough
I worship thee...

HELEN COX

Every Man has Something

"Smoking has gone out. To be sure, it is a shocking thing, blowing smoke out of our mouths into other people's mouths, eyes and noses, and having the same thing done to us. Yet I cannot account why a thing which requires so little exertion, and yet preserves the mind from total vacuity, should have gone out. Every man has something by which he calms himself: beating with his feet, or so."

JAMES BOSWELL, *Life of Samuel Johnson, 1791*

I Like it!

Tobacco is a dirty weed:
I like it.
It satisfies no normal need:
I like it.
It makes you thin, it makes you lean,
It takes the hair right off your bean,
It's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen:
I like it.

GRAHAM LEE HEMMINGER, *Tobacco*

Puffery

Sublime tobacco! which from east to west
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest . . .
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe;
When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich and ripe;
Like other charmers, wooing the caress
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties—give me a cigar!

LORD BYRON, *The Island*

Up in Smoke

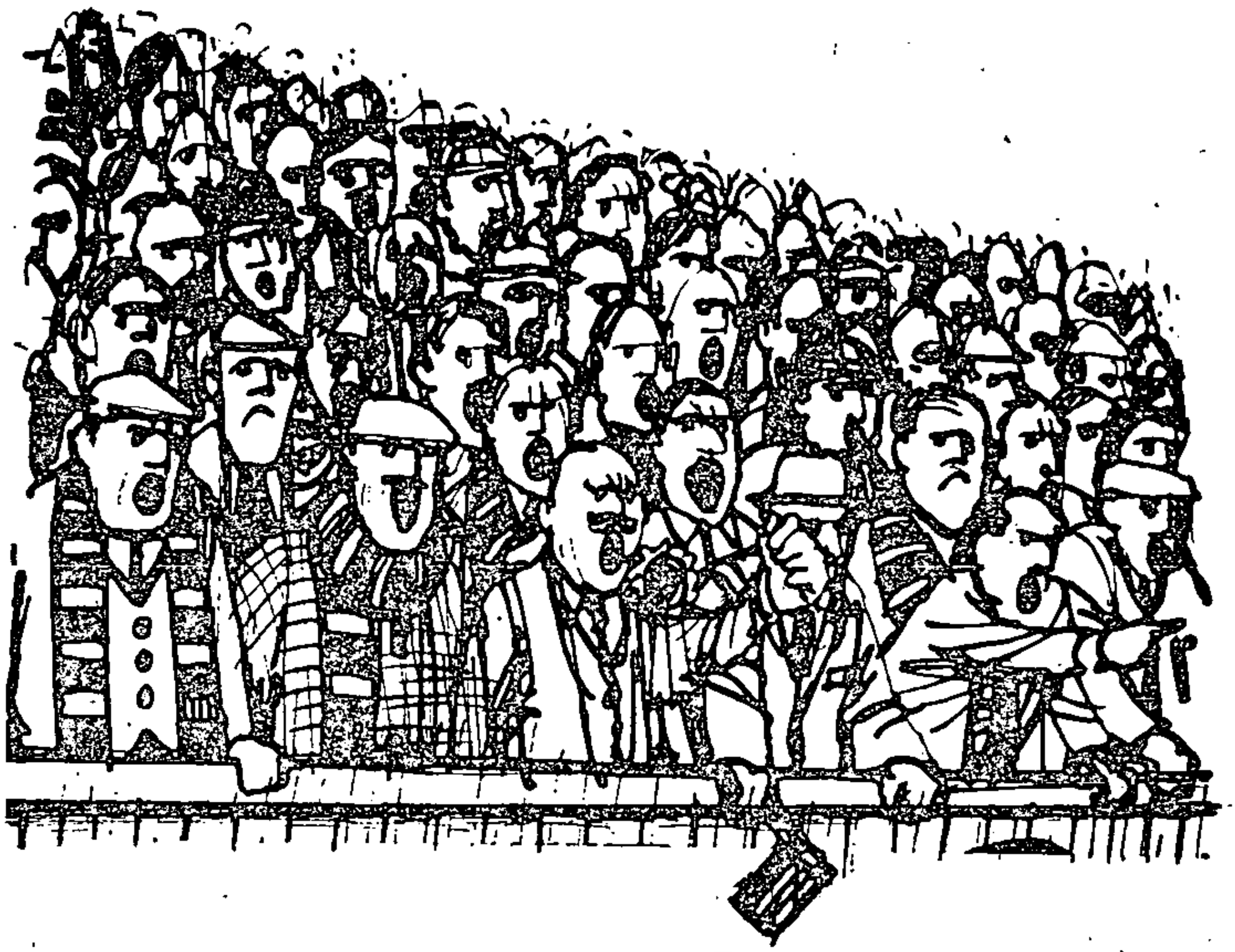
One of the most notable things I see in this kingdom and which strikes me as really marvellous, is the use of the queen's weed, properly called tobacco, whose dried leaves come from the Indies, packed like so much rope. It is cut and pounded and subsequently placed in a hollow instrument a span long, called a pipe. The powder is lighted at the largest part of the bowl, and they absorb the smoke with great enjoyment. They say it clears the head, dries up humours and greatly sharpens the appetite. It is in such frequent use that not only at every hour of the day but even at night they keep the pipe and steel at their pillows and gratify their longings. So much money is expended daily in this nastiness that at the present moment the trade in tobacco amounts to half a million in gold, and the duty on it alone yields the king 40,000 golden crowns yearly . . . This is in truth an affair of vanity and smoke and his Majesty abhors it. It is prohibited throughout the Court, though not by a decree. In my opinion no other country ought to introduce tobacco, for it enters cities with vapouring ostentation and then, after being well powdered, departs loaded with gold, leaving the purses of its purchasers empty and their wits addled.

ORAZIO BUSINO, *Calendar of State Papers, 1618*

Soaked

There was a young lady of Oakham,
Who would steal your cigars and then soak 'em
In treacle and rum;
And then smear them with gum,
So it wasn't a pleasure to smoke 'em.

EDWARD LEAR



SECTION OF THE CROWD

WHEN spectators start getting at you, they always talk about "a section of the crowd," but it doesn't *sound* like a section of the crowd, it sounds like every bloody person in the ground.

I remember the first time it happened to me at Rovers—we were playing Luton. I'd been in for the last two games, but this was the first one I'd had at home; we'd lost twice, but it wasn't my fault. I knew they were waiting for me, though; I could tell it the very first time I got the ball: "*Wake* up, Prentice; get rid of it, Prentice; what's the matter with you, Prentice?"

When you're nineteen, it's no use pretending—you notice that sort of thing, and it hurts. The trouble is, on a little ground like that, you can't get away from it, you hear everything, you feel you're surrounded by them, and every one of them's against you.

I kept wondering to myself, Why have they got it in for me? What have I done? Why don't they like me? Then

A gripping story to mark the start of the Soccer season by BRIAN GLANVILLE

I came out to the line for a ball, the centre half hit me, and as I was getting up I heard one of them say in the stand, "What did they go and drop Alfie for? I'd rather have Alfie any day than this kid." And I thought, so that's it—it was a relief, in a way—why didn't I think of it myself? I wanted to turn round to them and say, "It's not *my* fault I'm not Alf Harker, it's not *my* fault they've picked me instead of him, I didn't *ask* to be picked."

Because they all loved Harker, he'd been their centre forward for the last seven years. When they'd bought me in the summer from Chelmsford, I didn't know whether I wanted to go at first. I said, "You've got Harker, haven't you?" but Denis Graves, the manager, said, "Alfie's thirty-three, son, he can't go on for ever."

Mind you, I didn't rate this Harker all that, myself. He was great in the air, and that was mainly why they liked him—all the goals he headed—but on the ground I reckoned he was slow, the times I'd seen him; not just in moving, slow in thinking, too. He'd hardly ever go back for a ball, he was too lazy, or move out to the wings. When he did, it always looked to me like he wasn't doing it because it was on, it was because he wanted a rest.

When I got to the club in July, he wouldn't talk to me—as if he knew it was just a matter of time before I pushed him out, and he had it in for me already. I tried to be friendly with him—I mean, *I'd* never tried to do him any harm—but he still behaved the same and I thought, if he wants to be like that, well, bloody let him.

He played the first two months of the season, but he wasn't scoring, and with Alf, he was one of those centre forwards who if they weren't scoring, they weren't doing anything.

After a time, I began to fancy my chances; I was doing well in the combination, and I started wondering when they were going to bring me in. But the weeks kept going by and every Friday I'd look at the board and there I was again, down for the reserves; I wondered what I had to do.

The other boys said, "*He* won't drop Alfie—" meaning Denis Graves—"he's scared of the supporters. The only way you'll ever get in is if Alfie breaks a leg."

Well, he didn't break a leg, but he did pull a muscle

against Plymouth and the next Saturday I was in. We were up at Middlesbrough, and like I said, we lost, we lost 2-1, but I did all right, and I scored our goal. I'd never played a League game before, only Southern League and Combination, and the pace was a bit much at the beginning. In the Combination you've got time to control the ball and have a look round; if you do that in the Second Division they'll kick you up in the air, but anyway, I reckoned I was settling down.

The next week I was in again. The story Denis Graves gave the papers was that Alf wasn't fit; but he was training again and playing in the practice matches, and there didn't look anything wrong with him to me.

We lost that match, too, 3-2 away to Rotherham, but I got another goal. I thought, They can't drop me now, not after scoring in both games, and I knew the Boss was pleased because he came and sat next to me in the coach after the game and he told me so himself.

Several times in the week I felt like asking him, "Will I be in, Boss?" because I was worrying about it, it's the sort of thing that when you're young, it gets you down, and there was Alf turning his back on me every time I got near him, like it was *my* doing he was over the hill.

On the Thursday, I bought an evening paper—nobody told you anything at that club—and I saw, ROVERS WILL PICK FROM TWELVE—last Saturday's team and Harker. But this time there wasn't any of the old guff about whether he'd recovered from injury, just: *Manager Denis Graves may decide to give another run to the team which narrowly-lost at Rotherham last week, which would mean a home League debut for promising nineteen-year-old centre forward Ray Prentice.*

Jack Oakham, the right-back, that I was in lodgings with, said, "That means you'll be in. I know him. I know old Denis, he'll never come straight out with a thing if he can help it," and he was right, because next morning, I was in again. I didn't have to look at the list; I could see it from Alfie's face as soon as I got into the ground.

While we were lapping, I ran up beside him and I said, "Look, Alf, don't go holding it against me, me being in and you being out."

He said, "*I* don't hold nothing against you, what gave you that idea?"

I said, "I mean, it goes like that, doesn't it? Up and down. Next week, maybe you'll be back again and I'll be out, and *I* won't have any hard feelings."

"One more game," he said, "that's all *you'll* be in," and I ran on then and left him, I was mad; I thought he was just getting at me. I didn't realise then there was anything behind it.

It was the longest game I'd ever played in my life, that game. I was praying for it to end, but it seemed to go on for ever. The terrible thing when they get at you is they take all your confidence away. If you do something good, it's like doing it away from home—just silence—and if you do something bad, they're on you like a ton of bricks. What happens is you start hoping the ball won't come to you, you start hiding in places where you won't get it and when it does come, all you want to do is lay it off as quick as you can.

I knew I'd played badly, and they wouldn't even let me alone when it was over; they were yelling at me even when I went down the tunnel and to make it worse Alf Harker was there, he'd been sitting on the trainer's bench, and they were shouting, "Next week, then, Alfie boy," and he was standing grinning all over his face.

Tuesday when I turned up for training the Boss had me into his office, and I was wondering to myself, what does he want, am I going to get a bawling out for Saturday? But he was surprisingly nice about it, for him; he was very human, he said, "I know they were getting at you, I know they're a bad crowd, but *I* pick the team here, not them, and they'll have to get used to it. You'll be in again on Saturday."

Well, when I heard that, I practically danced out of his office, especially as we were playing up at Huddersfield, so I'd nothing to worry about.

He'd asked me not to say anything to Alf, otherwise I'd have sorted him out right away and told him, just to wipe the grin off his face; but whenever he was around, I'd be laughing and talking, and I could see I'd got him worried, he couldn't make it out.

We lost at Huddersfield but I got another goal, and this time the Boss told me, right after the match in the dressing-room, he said, "You're staying in."

I was delighted then, but after it had worn off and we were back in London again, I began to worry. We were at home that Saturday. I'd lie in bed and I'd hear them

shouting at me, all the foul language and the insults, "Harker's worth ten of him . . . Can't even bloody kick a ball," and "Why don't you go back to Chelmsford, son?"

Just before the match, when I was getting stripped, the Boss came up to me and said, "Look, forget about the crowd, Ray."

"Forget about them!" I said. "They won't let me."

"Listen," he said, "you know how to stop them? You know how to shut them up? By playing well. By scoring goals."

"They won't allow me to play well," I said.

"Won't allow you?" he said. "Where are they, then, on the pitch or on the terraces? On the field or in the stands?"

"Yes," I said, "but you can *hear* them on the field."

They never left me alone for a minute, not even when I got a kick on the knee and Jackie Morris, the trainer, had to come on; even *then* I could hear them shouting, "Get up, Prentice, there's nothing wrong with you!" and I felt I never wanted to get up again in my life—I was so choked I could have cried.

I said to Jackie Morris, "Listen to them, Jack."

He said, "That lot? You don't want to take any notice of *them*."

Even the centre half on the other side, he said to me, "They don't seem to like you down here, do they?"

"No," I said, "they don't want *me*, they want the old man, and as far as I'm concerned, after today they can have him, too."

On Tuesday I went in to see the Boss and I asked for a transfer. I said, "What use is there my staying here? They'll always have their knife into me, no matter what." I said, "It's all very well for you, telling me to take no notice of them, but you just can't *help* it, not unless you wear ear-plugs."

"Play on Saturday at Stoke," he said, "and afterwards, we'll see."

So I played at Stoke, but I didn't play well; it's not so easy to get your confidence back after something like that, especially if you don't begin the game too well—you keep listening for them all the time, even though you know they aren't there. By the end of the game all I could think of was, I must get away, I've got to get away; if I don't, they'll ruin my whole career.

Next week I told the Boss again, "I still want to go."

"Look," he said, "this'll pass. This is a crowd that *needs* someone to get its knife into, it's always been the same. I'll make a bargain with you. Play in the away games, and Alf Harker can play in the home games. And between you and me—I don't want this going any farther—he may not be with us very much longer."

"They'll like me even more then, won't they?" I said. "They'd never forgive me; it'd be my fault you got rid of him."

So for the next couple of months, that was how it went; Alf played in the home games and I played in the away games. There was a lot of talk in the papers about it; they interviewed me and they interviewed Alf. After a few weeks, I began to get a bit of confidence back and I started scoring again, but Alf was past it, they were carrying him, and in the end what Denis Graves did was to put an appeal in the programme, give our young centre forward a chance.

A couple of weeks after that, he picked me for a home match again. I wasn't keen to play, but I let him kid me into it.

He said, "Look, we've given them time to get over it, and between you and me, I think some of them are feeling a bit ashamed of themselves, after what I put in the programme. Anyway, I've got another trick up my sleeve."

The trick he'd got was he broadcast to the crowd before the match, he made this appeal to them. All I could hear from the dressing-room was somebody's voice coming over the loudspeaker, and then what sounded like the crowd all giving whoever it was the bird.

Then Jackie came in and said, "That was the Boss, he was asking the spectators to lay off Ray," and one of the other lads said, "Told *him* where to get off and all, didn't they?"

I was finished before I'd even kicked a ball. Once, in the second half, I just couldn't take any more of it. I turned round to the crowd behind the goal and I shouted, "Call yourselves supporters? You're worth a bloody goal to the other side!"

But that made them worse than before, it was what they'd wanted, really—I'd shown them they'd succeeded in getting under my skin.

I told the Boss, "It's no good, they just won't have me, you've got to let me go."

He said, "Give it till the end of the season," but I said, "I can't hang on till then, it'd turn me into a nut case, I'd be worrying all the time whether you were going to put me into a home match again."

"Look," he said, "if I *promise* you I won't put you in another home match," but I said, "No, I can't stand it, Boss, it's not doing *me* any good and it can't be doing the team any good, chopping and changing about from one week to the next."

"That's my business," he said, "if I can put up with it, you can," but I said, "I can't put up with it," and in the end he told me, "All right, I'll put you on the list if it'll make you any easier in your mind, but as soon as you change it, I'm ready to take you off."

I did feel better after that, because now at least I knew there was a limit to it, it couldn't go on for ever. I suppose in a way it was running away from it, and there were times when I saw Alf Harker looking so smug, that I nearly changed my mind, just to spite him, but I knew inside me that I couldn't stay. I couldn't have put it like this then, I was too young, but looking back I can see that what it was was self-preservation.

I was still playing the away games—most of them, anyway—and Harker was playing at home, but the other lads were getting fed up with it. They'd rather have had me every week, but they knew they couldn't, and in the end Ronnie Wilkinson, the skipper, went to the boss and said they couldn't go on like this, they had to change tactics every week: it had to be one of us or the other. Well, naturally it couldn't be me, not in the home games, so after that, I didn't play in the away games, either.

One or two clubs came after me, but they were Third Division clubs, and I wasn't going to move down if I could help it. Then, just about the turn of the year, Leeds United got interested. They agreed terms with Rovers, their manager came to the ground to see me, and I said, yes, I'd go; I was delighted.

The next thing that happened was Alf Harker got a kick on the Saturday and the week after that we were at home to Arsenal in the Third Round of the Cup.

Denis Graves said, "You'll have to play, Ray, he'll never be fit in time," and I said, "What, in a home match? You know what'll happen. You'd be better off putting *any*one else there, anyone: one of the ball boys."

"Look, play," he said, "it's your last game; what have you got to lose? Show them what they're missing," and I let him talk me into it.

When the match came round, I didn't care. They got at me again, but I was sort of cut off from them, it was like I could hear and I couldn't hear. I thought, I'll be away from here next week, and I thought, when I go off the field at the end, I'd like to put two fingers up at them, and thinking of it made me burst out laughing.

Sometimes you play better when you don't care, and it was like that with me. I was really wanting the ball, I was moving well, and in the first half I went round Dodgin once and hit the bar. Another time, I got my head to a corner, and Kelsey only just reached the ball and touched it over. The crowd were leaving me alone now, or maybe it was just that I didn't hear them because I was playing well—and anyway I didn't care.

At half-time there wasn't any score, we were playing above ourselves, and in the second half there still weren't any goals till five minutes from the end. Then our left winger, Charlie Love, beat the back and put the ball across very hard and low.

I came running in and I flung myself for it, it couldn't have been more than a couple of feet above the ground when I met it, then the stand seemed to fall in on me and I went out like a light.

I came round with Jackie squirting water in my face from the sponge and the crowd were going mad, and I looked up at him and said, "Did I score, Jackie?" and he said, "Ay, you did, you scored."

Then he helped me up and the others were shaking hands with me and thumping me on the back.

Arsenal kicked off and they really hammered us, but the defence held out and we'd beaten them, we were into the next round. When I came off the field, they were cheering me; I came down the tunnel and they were all slapping me on the shoulder and trying to pat me on the head.

Denis Graves followed me down into the dressing-room, he put his arm round my shoulders and he said, "Well done, boy, you'll be staying with us *now*, eh?"

And I looked at him and I said, "What, staying? After that? Not me," I said, "not for a million bloody pounds."

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AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD . . .
BY THELWELL

"Grandma, for heaven's sake stop yelling *olé!*"

The Rival

by Eric Cameron

She stared at him with a strained expression of horror and disbelief

WHEN Billy crawled into the living room, Sandy opened his eyes a slit and watched warily from the couch, feigning sleep, hoping that some object might distract the baby's attention from him. Billy paused to regurgitate some curdled milk. Blinking owlishly, a thread of saliva dangling from his chin, he watched it soak into the green broadloom. Sandy sighed. It had become almost impossible to escape the sour odours that talcum powder failed to camouflage.

He had rejected the baby from the start, recognising it as a rival for the affection that Janis had lavished on him until little Billy intruded upon the domestic scene. She neglected him now, Sandy brooded morosely, thinking of how Janis fussed over the baby's meals—when it came to *his* food, he was lucky if she remembered to open a tin and slap something down before him.

Life had become an exasperation now that drooling little Billy was beginning to crawl. Sandy watched with a tingle of anticipation as his rival reached up over the edge of the rosewood coffee table. The chubby hand groped aimlessly until the sticky fingers encountered the lid of the Wedgwood cigarette box. It clattered on to the table, but to Sandy's regret it didn't break. It would have been some consolation to see Billy punished for something.

Dragging the cigarette box off the table, the baby methodically scattered the white cylinders on the rug and explored them with a frown of concentration. The little monster might try to eat one, Sandy thought hopefully. But after

breaking several cigarettes and pawing at the tobácco, Billy lost interest in them.

As Billy lurched in his direction, Sandy hastily vacated the couch and darted from the room. Scrambling over the expanding gate that closed off the bottom of the stairway to the baby, Sandy raced up to the study, where he listened with some satisfaction to Billy's howls of frustration. He settled down in the old leather-upholstered armchair with a contented sigh. Its faint, aromatic odour of tobacco reminded him of that time before the household upheaval created by the helpless, slobbering little tyrant who dominated every moment of the day (and much of the night) with his shrill demands.

Sandy closed his eyes and recalled past pleasures shared with Janis: the long walks in the autumn and spring, exploring little-used paths in the wooded section of park that began only two blocks from the house. She would laugh at his clowning when he hurried ahead to hide and then pounced out at her in mock attack. At the base of a massive old elm by the edge of the pond, they would sprawl to soak up the sun and watch the ducks. He would rest his head in her lap and close his eyes while Janis caressed him. Now it was little Billy she fondled and whispered to . . .

"*Sand-ee!*" Janis called from downstairs.

He wondered why she wanted him, feeling tempted to ignore her in retaliation. When he heard the squeak of the pram springs in the front hall, he realised that she was taking Billy for an airing and was inviting him to go along. If the baby got too noisy he could always leave them.

Billy was cooing as he lay on his back in the pram and waved his feet. Just as Janis was closing the front door the telephone started ringing.

"That must be Marge," Janis said. "Keep an eye on Billy," she told Sandy as she hurried back into the house. The draught swung the door shut.

Sandy sniffed deeply of the air that had the sharp, sunny smell of autumn, seasoned with a pungent whiff of smoke from piles of leaves someone was burning. There was a brisk feeling of activity in the air, of preparation for winter, even though the tree-lined street was deserted and the comfortable homes seemed to be dozing. Then the thought of a winter of confinement under the same roof as little Billy became like a cloud that blotted out the ray of good feeling.

The *staccato* exhaust of an accelerating car brought Sandy's

head around. The Davis boy was gunning his flame-red sports car down the middle of the street. When his father wasn't home, he tuned-up with tyre-screeching circuits of the block. The car vanished around the corner and Sandy's eyes turned back to the pram. It was jiggling with Billy's energetic contortions, moving back and forth slightly because Janis had not set the brake; less than a yard from the front wheels the drive began its slope to the pavement.

Just as Billy began to whine, the throaty snarl of the Davis boy's car began approaching the far corner. Billy's petulant whine rose to a shrill demand for attention, a counter-point to the rising exhaust note.

A push against the back of the pram set it in motion. Billy's outcry began to subside when he became aware of the movement. As the red car roared down the street, the pram bounded from the pavement with a sickening lurch.

The Davis boy yanked wildly on the steering wheel, stood on the brake pedal and black streaks appeared behind the rear wheels as the tyres shrieked their protest. The car swerved and mounted the kerb. The pram collided with it at an angle, careened away and overturned, spilling Billy out on the asphalt. A huge willow arrested the car's progress with a deafening clang of metal and tinkling glass. In the abrupt silence that followed, Billy's limbs twitched spasmodically.

Sandy's legs trembled. He jerked to one side as Janis ran out of the house. The colour drained from her face as she ran to Billy.

People were beginning to converge on the scene. The owner of the house with the willow tree had rushed out holding a paint can and brush. The red-headed woman from next door was standing by the dividing hedge, staring at Sandy with a strained expression of horror and disbelief.

Under the woman's accusing stare, Sandy went slowly down the walk towards the kerb. Janis cradled Billy in her arms and tears streamed down her cheeks. Two men were assisting the groggy Davis boy from the wrecked car. Several panting, wide-eyed children darted here and there, but became motionless when a patrol car slammed to a stop.

"He did it!" cried the red-haired woman to the two officers, pointing her trowel. "I saw him push the pram!"

As everyone turned to look at the woman, Sandy edged away—he didn't want to attract attention by running.

"*Sand-ee!*" Janis called worriedly.

Sandy turned, glared at the square-jawed face shadowed

by the helmet, then whirled and broke into a run. The footsteps pounded behind him for a time, then receded.

There were hundreds of places in the park where he could hide until darkness fell. Then he would creep out and go somewhere far away. Janis would never want him back after what had happened, and he didn't want to go back, even if she were willing to forgive him.

He glanced round after entering the park, expecting to see the policeman at least a block away. But he hadn't reckoned with the patrol car. It was at the park gate and both policemen were loping after him.

Part way through the first wooded section he doubled back and crawled out of sight under a clump of dense bushes, hugging the ground, listening to the hammering of his heart. The policemen called to each other as they fanned out. Other adults joined the hunt, but the children were kept at a safe distance by the red-headed woman. Sandy hated her as she talked to Janis, who was cuddling Billy in her arms.

He was so intent on watching Janis that he failed to notice the younger of the two policemen come quietly to within ten feet of the bushes. Sandy tensed, ready for fight or flight. But the policeman moved off and he relaxed.

Just then the red-headed woman's six-year-old son grabbed his sister's ball and threw it. The yellow ball bounced, rolled towards Sandy and the boy galloped in pursuit, ignoring his mother's strident voice. When he stooped to pick it up, the boy's pale eyes met Sandy's and his mouth gaped. Sandy lunged from his hiding place.

He heard the dry bark of the gun-shot, then he was rolling on the grass. When he tried to stand up his right leg crumpled. The second bullet struck him in the chest and knocked him down. His eyes were glazing when the policemen reached him, but he was still able to bare his teeth in a feeble snarl.

"Wildest thing I ever come across," panted the officer who had shot him.

"The woman insists she saw him push the pram to send it down the drive," said the other policeman.

"My cousin used to have a dog just like him," the first policeman said. "Those Irish setters are very high-strung animals. He probably got jealous of the attention the baby was getting."

Sandy sighed, quivered and relaxed.

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The story of a man who found that he could have everything . . . at a price!

a foot in the DOOR

by BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN

WHEN he was thirty-four years old and about to buy a house in Short Hills, Mr. Gordon discovered he could get anything he wanted in life from an insurance agent named Merz.

The agent specialised in small, cheap policies, thousand-dollar endowments, and put his feet in your door.

Mr. Gordon had succeeded in putting Merz off and one night shouted at him, "I don't like people who put their feet in doors. That's no way to sell to me."

"It's something I do and I can't help it," said Merz wedging his foot in Gordon's apartment door and trying to force it back. "It isn't important and you'll soon see why. You'll see it is foolish to make anything over the foot business."

Gordon finally let Merz in—a thin man who got bad shaves and was always out of breath.

Merz sold him a quick thousand-dollar endowment and when Mr. Gordon showed him out, said, "I've got something else you'll want. It's a way for you to have anything in the world. I haven't figured out whether it is insurance or not, but I have it for you and we can start it off tonight."

"I have plenty," said Gordon. "Everything I want. I'm going to buy a house in Short Hills

next week. As a matter of fact, that's something I've always wanted."

"There'll be no nonsense and no fooling around," said Merz. "What you really want is a home in Tall Hills, and one thing you'd better learn is that it's a waste of time to be coy on this thing. Now I can get it for you. What we do is make a bargain. Some of them are going to sound strange, but they're made up that way and, frankly, I don't make them up."

"I can't afford Tall Hills," said Mr. Gordon, "but all right, I'll admit I'd like to get in there."

"*All right then*, now listen," said Mr. Merz, blowing his thin nose. "I don't do any paper work on these so remember it and don't come around to me and say you didn't get what you were supposed to. Tall Hills is yours, if... Let me rephrase that—when you don't use paper work, you've got to get them straight in the talking. A *house* in Tall Hills is yours, but your baby will have to be born with a slightly bent nose. I know that you, your wife and your little girl have straight ones, but that's the way these things are made up. Sometimes a real winner comes, but most are on this order."

"I'm not going to ask you for any guarantee, because I can tell from the whole way this has happened that it's on the level," said Mr. Gordon. "If you're wondering why I don't act astonished, it's just that I always expected something like this to happen. The only thing is, I always thought there would be ethereal music in the background. Let's see, if it's a boy it won't matter so much and would give him character. The odds are slightly in favour of its being a boy. I don't know."

"Can we close?" said Merz. "It isn't that I go off and sell to others when I'm finished with you. There aren't any others. I'm just tired and I get colds when I'm out late."

"Even if it were a girl," said Mr. Gordon, "it might just be the little imperfection that would make her appealing. I once saw a girl who was married to an archæologist and she had a slight limp and it made her the most fragile and pathetic thing, and I could have eaten her up. Maybe this would be like a limp on her nose. Look, is it bent quite a bit or just slightly? Do I get to know that?"

"We don't know how they come out. It's more the spirit of the thing that counts, and if it came out small, there wouldn't be any objection."

"All right, then," said Mr. Gordon. "Get me into Tall Hills."

Merz said, "I can't always let you have this much time," and disappeared.

The Gordons' second child was born a month later, a boy with a cute but slightly bent little nose; and Mr. Gordon did not suddenly inherit a fortune. Nor did he suddenly receive a giant bonus from his firm or win a cash prize in a lottery. What happened is that he received a *small* inheritance from an uncle of his who had once spent a weekend hunting with Pancho Villa; his agency came through at Christmas with a slightly larger bonus than it had before, and Mrs. Gordon won a motorcycle in a raffle which they cashed in for four hundred dollars.

The total, along with the money Mr. Gordon had set aside for a house in Short Hills, gave them the down payment for one in Tall Hills. And in they went with their new, cute, but bent-nosed little baby.

A month after the Gordons settled into their home, Merz stuck his foot in the door late one night and Mr. Gordon said, "You don't have to put it in there *now*, you know."

"I just put it in there and don't really care to change at this stage of the game," said Merz. "Don't you open the door either. Let me force my way in."

Mr. Gordon put his shoulder against the door and finally let Merz, breathing hard, shove his way in. "Okay now," said Merz. "I think you should have another thousand-dollar endowment. Now look, I don't want that other thing to colour your decision. I'm talking straight insurance now, and if I found out you were taking a policy just because of that other thing I do, I'd be sore. Do you want one? Remember, it's important to keep these things separate."

"Then I don't think so," said Mr. Gordon. "I've got enough coverage for now."

"You don't," said Merz. "I'm going to keep hounding you until you buy more endowments. You don't have half enough and ought to be ashamed of yourself for carrying so little. But if you dare buy one because of that other arrangement we have, I'll kick you in the chops."

"I was wondering how often you come around," said Mr. Gordon. "That other thing really worked out. He's going to have a certain American-Indian appeal, and I don't think it'll bother him."

"I don't get into whether it'll bother him or not," said Merz. "All right then, you want Simms transferred and

wall-to-wall carpeting, some of it covering the staircase to the second floor. This is going to make you laugh so you might as well get in the snickers right now. You get a wool or cotton option on the carpeting, any shade."

"That *is* funny," said Mr. Gordon. "Why do I want Simms transferred?"

"*I told you I wouldn't settle for any coy stuff!*" said Merz, rising in anger. He sat again, regaining his composure.

"Because we're neck and neck and because he has a slightly better personality and at one point or another will be quietly eased in as a senior executive, that's why," said Mr. Gordon.

"All right, then," said Merz. "Now I want your Uncle Lester."

"What do you mean you *want* him?" asked Mr. Gordon. "Don't tell me, because I know."

"That's right," said Merz, "He *goes*. Don't pin me down as to how, but I do know it won't be pretty."

"I didn't know that anyone had to *go*," said Gordon. "I thought what it would probably be is just *doing* things to people but not actually having them go. Anyway, it's amazing the way you work these things out. If you'd said Aunt Clara or Cousin Lars, I'd have thrown you out of here. These people are old and beat up and I don't see them more than once in a blue moon, but when I hug them to me I get a feeling of kinship and *camaraderie*. I don't get that at all from Uncle Lester and don't like the way he smells. He works on those prescriptions twelve hours a day and I never did understand him. He's seventy-six or something and it won't be long now for him anyway. All right then, he goes, but it's amazing how you knew to say Uncle Lester and not Aunt Clara. I'd have fought the hell out of you on her."

"They're made up cleverly, all right," said Merz, blowing his nose, "but I don't want to stay here and get friendly with you. All I really care about is that you buy more endowments, but purely on an insurance basis, and *not* because of this other arrangement of ours. Do you want cotton or wool carpeting?"

"Which do you think?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"If I was allowed to, I'd kick your chops," said Mr. Merz angrily. "Don't ask me any idiotic things."

"All right then, wool," said Mr. Gordon. "Beige wool," and Merz flew out of the door.

Within a week, a love affair between Simms and a bookkeeping girl came out in the open.

The agency head called in Simms and said, "I don't care how creative you are, what you're doing is Hollywood and is a definite stink."

Simms went to Dubuque, and Mr. Gordon sat back and waited to be told he'd been promoted and given an increase, one that worked out to $1,437 a year—the exact amount he'd need for carpeting the downstairs and the steps.

No promotion came, but at the end of a month, Merz drove up at night in a truck, and put his foot in Mr. Gordon's door.

"I don't see why you have to go through this each time," said Mr. Gordon, holding the door.

"I don't ask you questions," said Merz, his nose red, finally elbowing his way in. "I brought the carpeting. There was no way to have it just *get* to you so we're just handing it over. That happens sometimes and this is the one receipt I'll need."

Mr. Gordon signed a piece of paper and Merz said, "Caught you. I didn't really need a receipt for the carpeting. I told you there's no paper work on the bargains we make. What you just signed is for an endowment policy."

Merz left the carpeting on Mr. Gordon's porch and shot away.

Over the weekend, police caught Mr. Gordon's Uncle Lester accepting a case of stolen and tainted penicillin. A grand jury hearing was scheduled, but later that week Uncle Lester, out on bail, drove to the state line and shot himself in the temple, leaving a garbled note that said, roughly, "Middle-class embarrassment."

When Mr. Gordon read about the note, he told Mrs. Gordon, "It's odd I should get a feeling of *camaraderie* for Uncle Lester now—after reading the note. I never had one before now."

A month later, Merz got Mr. Gordon into the Tall Hills Golf Club. The arrangement put Gordon's father-in-law in a new job, one that sent the elderly, nearsighted man driving along precipitous mountain passes in southern Wyoming selling educational training-aids to out-of-the-way prisons and mental hospitals. The final deal shipped Mr. Gordon, his wife, and one of the children off on a long-dreamed-of one-month vacation to Sark, and gave Mr. Gordon's mother a

permanent toe-fungus, one that was relatively harmless but maddeningly irritating. Mr. Gordon could have got two months in Majorca but balked when Merz insisted he would have to "take" Mr. Gordon's mother.

The Sark weather was bad, and the Gordons got back a few days early. On the night of their arrival, Mr. Gordon got a call from a sultry-voiced female who said, "This is to inform you that Mr. Merz is dead and won't be selling you any further endowments."

The woman hung up, and Mr. Gordon, feeling a little bit alone, thought, I wonder if this is all there is to it? Whether I get to go on as though nothing had ever happened? Being a realistic thinker, Mr. Gordon could not figure out any reason why he should not go ahead and live his life as he had always lived it.

Several weeks later, Mr. Gordon lost a cuff-link and went into a charming little out-of-the-way *boutique* to replace it. The girl behind the counter had dark hair covering her shoulders, melting brown eyes, and breasts that were impressive in that they were perfectly separated and elevated. She wore an intriguing scent and Mr. Gordon said, "You know, I came in here to buy cuff-links, but your perfume is enchanting. You're damned appealing, too. What is it called?"

"*Pizanie*," the girl said, in a husky voice. "Accent on the second syllable. But too many people call it *Pizzanee*."

"It bowls me over," said Mr. Gordon. "Are you allowed to have lunch with people?"

"Mr. Lopez will sell you the cuff-links," the girl said, lowering her lovely melting eyes.

A young man wearing a pinched suit in the style of a foppish Londoner came out with a tray of twisted metal cuff-links and said, "I'm Lopez. These are from Mexico." Mr. Gordon selected a pair.

Mr. Lopez said, "I've made a lunch reservation for the three of us."

Mr. Gordon felt excited over the spontaneity of this new adventure and with a strange thrill fluttering at the base of his spine went along with his two new friends.

The scent of the girl kept him bewildered through the first course and then it occurred to him that he had heard her voice before. "Didn't you call and tell me Merz was dead?" he asked.

She lowered her eyes and Mr. Lopez, eating with exquisite manners, said, "I asked her to call. Now look, I'm doing them with you from now on, only they'll be slightly different. Not really in spirit, but the ante goes up quite a bit. Now here's the first. You can have Lisa here any weekend you like, on into the interminable future, and we get your hair of course."

Mr. Gordon's hand instinctively passed up to his forehead and he asked, "All of it?"

"You get a fringe around the ears and a crescent on the back of the head, you know how that thing looks. We give you a premature grey speckling if you like, to soften the contrast between the fringe and your pale skin. It's better if you keep it short and, for whatever it's worth, we do foot all haircut bills from then on. Your wife doesn't ever get to know about Lisa."

"Look," said Mr. Gordon, "I don't want to act the prude and say the idea is horrible and that I don't want any girl I have to pay for. The only thing that irritates me is how you can set it up right in front of her that way."

"I don't care about her," said Mr. Lopez. "She helps me sell cuff-links."

The air was full of Lisa, and Mr. Gordon said, "Do you mean one weekend or all weekends for ever?"

"As many as you like."

"I should probably be figuring this out to myself but I have to talk to someone," said Mr. Gordon. "What do I need my hair for if I can have her any time I want automatically? Now look, Lopez, there is one thing. I'm sorry about asking this, Lisa, but I'll just get it in and then I'll never do anything as crude as this again. There's nothing wrong with her? I mean, she doesn't get epileptic fits or anything I should know about? Or limp? That's silly. Actually I don't mind a limp in a girl, and it's funny I should bring that in here. All right, I'll go along."

"I don't write them down either," said Lopez. "Would you like another pair of cuff-links?"

"I'll take one more pair," said Mr. Gordon, tremulously taking the girl's hand.

The hair came out gradually in Mr. Gordon's comb and was gone within a month. Not until the last few dropped out did Mr. Gordon think of exercising his option, and on that day he bought a Homburg and dropped in at the *boutique*. He had a horrible fear, for one second, that Lisa

would no longer be there and that he would have to travel the earth, hairless, to find his booty.

But she was waiting, warm and sweet, with the scent of *Pizanie* floating about her ears, her bosom high and impeccably separated.

Lopez came out with a tray from India and Mr. Gordon gave him two-fifty.

Lopez asked him into a private office then and said, "Today's involves getting away from it all, leaving your job and doing whatever you want to do. Freedom. It's the only thing you don't have, not a fortune, but enough income to be able to thumb your nose at it all."

"As it stands I'll have to go into that stinking office right to my grave," said Mr. Gordon. "I make a good living, but I need to have every nickel to do what I'm doing. All right, what do you take? Paralysis for my sister? A nervous breakdown for Dad? Shoot. This is going to be really good."

"A single evening with your wife."

"You can't have a single evening with my wife. Who gets it, you?"

"No," said Lopez.

"What do I care who gets it? That's beside the point. I can't let you have that. I know, I know, I'm a hypocrite. I'll sell out my Uncle Lester and throw away my kid's nose and yet I make a big fuss over a single, meaningless act of the flesh. I'm not going along, that's all. That's one deal I won't make and I'm not even going to explain it."

"You'll never have to do a day's work in your life."

"You mean just one time with one man?" said Mr. Gordon.

"That's all," said Mr. Lopez.

"When?" asked Gordon.

"You bring her to a Twenties party Saturday night. You can have her be a flapper and you a Harvard cheerleader. Lisa and I will be there as a Twenties gangster and his moll."

"This is one I don't feel happy about at all," said Mr. Gordon.

"Do we have an agreement?" asked Lopez.

"Yes," said Gordon.

During the week, Mr. Gordon rented a costume for his wife. She said it was beautiful and maybe he could buy it for her after the party.

The party itself was dimly lit and all of the people were in costume, although some of them had spoiled the theme by showing up in flamenco dress. It was thick and loud and wild and Mrs. Gordon was immediately snapped up for the dance floor, leaving Mr. Gordon standing alone in his cheerleader uniform. Lisa and Lopez came over then. She made a lovely moll, one with perfectly separated breasts and the scent of *Pizanie* about her throat.

"Look, I'm not going along," said Mr. Gordon, glancing over at his wife on the dance floor. She was whirling about with one of the flamenco fellows. "I can't even stand it when she dances with someone. Look, I can't go through with it. Who's the one she has to be with?"

"I told you that wasn't important," said Lopez.

"Will you point him out?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"Yes," said Lopez, and Mr. Gordon put his arms around Lisa and led her to the dance floor.

Fifteen minutes later, Lopez tapped him on the shoulder and said, "She's with him now." Mr. Gordon looked up and saw his wife dancing with a slender, muscular man in a Twenties tank suit.

They spun around. It was Merz. He seemed a trifle younger and somewhat better-looking than he had been before.

"You said he was dead," Mr. Gordon said to Lisa.

"Under my orders," said Lopez. "Don't blame her."

"Well that settles it," said Mr. Gordon. "Now I'm definitely not going through with it. Not till hell freezes over."

"We have an agreement," said Lopez, through thin lips.

"I don't care," said Mr. Gordon. "Not Merz. Maybe someone else, but not him. That's where I draw the line. I don't care what I said."

"It has to be Merz," said Lopez. "It's all arranged."

"Now look," said Gordon, running his hands over his bare dome. "I don't know whether I have the strength to argue with you or what, but I am not going through with this and that's that. I knew I shouldn't have started on this one. Now look, I'll give you this much. Inside of blouse, upper thigh, and heavy necking, but that's it. Not the whole deal. Never the whole deal. Not with Merz."

"I can't account for what happens, when you change them," said Lopez.

"Well, I don't care," said Mr. Gordon, folding his arms. "That's it and that's the way it's going to be."

"All right," said Lopez. "But I can't guarantee what's

going to happen when you fool around with the packages. They're packaged one way for a reason."

"He wasn't even supposed to be alive," said Mr. Gordon, encircling Lisa's waist with his arms and picking up the music.

In a short while, he saw Mrs. Gordon and Merz get their coats and slip out of the door. He kept dancing, and at the end of the evening, Mrs. Gordon returned alone and went into the powder room.

Lopez came over and slipped a piece of paper into Mr. Gordon's cheerleading blazer. "It's a cheque that comes to sixteen hundred dollars, which is the store's gross weekly income. That's the way we have it set up, only you'll get it from now on in monthly payments. It's fairly steady, and of course if the store should fail, we're in supermarkets, clothing, and you should have no cause for anxiety. I'm taking Lisa now, but of course you can pick her up any weekend, beginning Friday nights at six forty-five and ending at the dinner hour Sunday, let's say eight."

Mr. Gordon was quite anxious throughout the following week and neither quit his job nor picked up Lisa. The following Saturday morning, Mrs. Gordon came to the breakfast table fully dressed and said, "I've got to go away and I don't think I'm coming back, and there's no need for you to talk patiently with me. It's going to be for always with this man and there isn't a thing in the world anyone can say to me to stop me. I don't know about the children. I just know I have to go. There was a brief time when it seemed if we could only get it out of our systems we could have forgotten each other, but it wasn't possible and now we have to go away together and take a lifetime because it isn't ever going to get out of our systems."

"Merz?" said Mr. Gordon.

"That's his name," said Mrs. Gordon, "but there isn't any use in your saying it a funny way or trying to cut him down because I need him and must have him."

Mr. Gordon's face went cold, and after his wife left, the shock carried him through the day and he remained rigid, like a sliding pond, as the children played all over him. What he was certain was going to hit him never did, somehow, and he got through the following week with only occasional spasms of nausea.

On Friday evening at six forty-five, he went to Lisa's apartment, and the second she opened the door he bit her

earlobe and inhaled her and undressed her and had her before the clock said seven. There had been a moment at the door, when he had feared a kind of quiet resignation on her part, but such was not the case and she made love to him with frenzy and hunger and they stayed together through the night.

In the morning, she sat up and stretched in her nightdress, and yawned, and the nausea came back to him. "That *Pizanie* stays right on all through the night," he said to her.

"So many people call it *Pizz*anee," she said languorously.

"I don't like it in the morning when I want eggs," he said. "I'm not even sure I want it in the afternoon or any time before six forty-five. And even then, I'm not sure any more," he said.

Dressing quickly, he hollered, "*PIZZ*ANEE, *PIZZ*ANEE, *PIZZ*ANEE, IT SHOULD BE CALLED *PIZZ*ANEE," and then flew out of the door.

He went to a private detective's office and told the man he wanted to find his wife and Merz. After twelve minutes of phone calls, the detective traced the pair to Las Vegas and said to Mr. Gordon, "You owe me forty-three dollars."

"How do you get that?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"I just do," said the detective.

"All right," said Mr. Gordon, paying the man. "I have unlimited funds."

A jet liner took Mr. Gordon to Las Vegas the same evening. He felt very giddy travelling without luggage, without preparation.

In Las Vegas he checked the registers of the big hotels for Merz' name and couldn't find it.

Then he went to the smaller hotels that weren't on the Strip and found a listing for a couple named Merzedes.

Taking the stairs two at a time, he pounded on the door of the room until Merz opened it, wearing just a pair of underpants.

He had grown a goatee in the beatnik style and his hair was unruly.

The room was sultry and had no air-conditioning. Inside, Mr. Gordon could see his wife in a pair of panties he recognised and a monogrammed blouse.

"Look, Merz," said Mr. Gordon, "my foot is in your door. The whole thing's off. I have got to have her back. I don't care whether she wants to come or not. She'll get used to

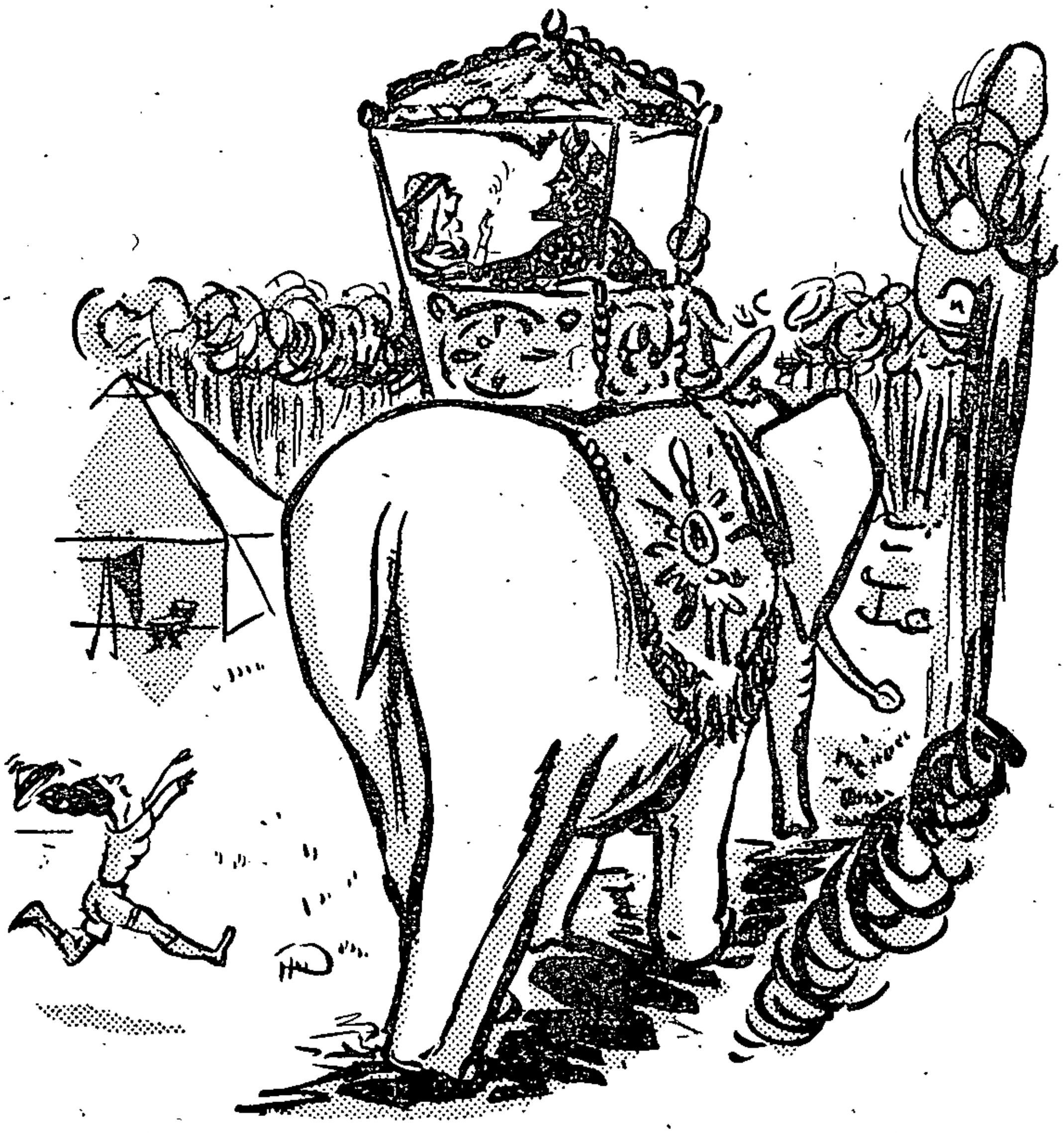
me again and forget you, even if it takes fifty-two years. But she's my wife and I've got to have her back and there's no power on earth can stop me, I don't care who's behind this."

"I can't do it," said Merz.

"Why not?" said Mr. Gordon, with fists clenched.

"Because I took asthma, a bleeding ulcer and let a Long Island train wreck have six of my grandchildren for your wife, that's why. It was under a special incentive plan for us employees."

Mr. Gordon understood perfectly and went away.



"But Miriam, you haven't left a forwarding address!"

GALLERY of GREATS

The Dowry

by

Guy de Maupassant

NO-ONE was surprised when Maître Simon Lebrument married Mademoiselle Jeanne Cordier. Maître Lebrument had just bought the practice of Maître Papillon, the solicitor, and of course that cost money; and Mademoiselle Jeanne Cordier had three hundred thousand francs in ready money, bank-notes, and bearer bonds.

Maître Lebrument was a good-looking bachelor and a man of some distinction: he looked like a provincial lawyer, it is true, but he had distinction, and that was not common at Boutigny-le-Rebours.

Mademoiselle Cordier had charm and freshness, though she was a bit awkward and unsmart, but, taken all in all, she was a pretty girl, attractive, and presentable.

The wedding caused a great stir in Boutigny, where the young couple were universally admired.

Instead of going away for their honeymoon, they went back to the domestic fireside, having decided just to take a little trip to Paris after a few days alone together.

This arrangement was a great success; Maître Lebrument showed unusual tact, delicacy, and refinement in his first relations with his wife. His motto was "Everything comes to him who waits." He was at once patient and ardent, and his conquest was swift and complete.

In four days Madame Lebrument worshipped her husband. She could not let him out of her sight; she had to have him near her all day to fondle and kiss, to stroke his hands, ruffle his beard, and pull his nose. She used to sit on his knee and, seizing both his ears, she would say, "Open your mouth and

shut your eyes"; he opened his mouth obediently, half closed his eyes and received a long, loving kiss, which sent shivers down his spine. And he in his turn could not satisfy his wife with caresses and kisses, fondling and cuddling her from morning to night and from night to morning.

At the end of the first week he said to his young wife, "If you like, we'll go to Paris next Tuesday. We'll just be lovers and go to restaurants, theatres, music-halls, and everywhere."

She jumped for joy. "That'll be marvellous; do let's go."

He went on, "And we mustn't forget anything; tell your father to have your dowry ready; I'll take it with us, and while we're there, I'll settle with Maître Papillon."

She said, "I'll tell him tomorrow morning."

And he took her in his arms and started again all the lovers' games she had come to be so fond of during the last week.

The following Tuesday the father- and mother-in-law saw their daughter and son-in-law off at the station.

The father-in-law said, "I warn you, it's rash to carry so much money in your briefcase."

And the young lawyer smiled. "Don't worry, Daddy; I'm used to this sort of thing. You see, in my job I sometimes have as much as a million francs on me. In this way we avoid endless formalities and delays. Don't you worry."

The guard was shouting, "Passengers for Paris, take your seats!" They hurriedly got into a carriage, where they found two old ladies.

Lebrument murmured to his wife, "What a bore! I shan't be able to smoke."

She whispered back, "Yes, it's a bore for me too, but not for the same reason!"

The train whistled and started. The journey took an hour, during which they didn't talk much, because the old ladies didn't go to sleep.

When they got into the station yard of the Gare St-Lazare, Lebrument said to his wife, "Let's go and get some lunch on the Boulevard; then we'll come back quietly and pick up our luggage and take it to the hotel."

She immediately agreed, "Yes, I'd love to lunch at a restaurant. Is it far?"

He replied, "Yes, it's some way; we'll take a bus."

She was surprised. "Can't we take a cab?"

He smilingly scolded her; "That's the way you save money! A cab for a five-minute journey at half a franc a minute!"

"You're quite right," she said, a little ashamed.

A large bus with three trotting horses was passing. Lebrument shouted, "Hi, conductor! Stop!"

The heavy vehicle stopped, and the young lawyer, hustling his wife in, said quickly to her, "You go inside, I'll go on top; I must have one cigarette before lunch."

She had no time to answer; the conductor, who had seized her by the arm to help her up the step, pushed her into the bus and she collapsed, quite flustered, on to a seat, watching with dazed eyes out of the back window her husband's legs disappearing on to the top.

She sat motionless between a fat man who smelled of tobacco and an old woman who smelled of dogs.

The other passengers were sitting silent in a row—a grocer's boy, a seamstress, an infantry sergeant, a gentleman with gold-rimmed spectacles and a top hat with an enormous brim standing up like a gutter-pipe, two pompous ladies with an ill-tempered expression, whose whole attitude seemed to say: "We are here, but we are really too good for a bus," two nuns, a hatless girl, and an undertaker's mute; they looked like a collection of burlesque figures, a museum of grotesques, a series of caricatures of the human face, like those rows of comic dolls one knocks down with balls at a fair.

The jolting of the bus made their heads wobble and shake and their flabby cheeks quivered like jelly; mesmerised by the grinding vibration of the wheels, they had a vacant, dazed look.

The young woman sat there dully. Why didn't he come with me? she wondered, feeling vaguely uncomfortable. I do think he might have gone without his cigarette.

The nuns signalled to the conductor to stop, and got out one in front of the other, leaving behind them the fusty smell of an old-clothes shop.

The bus went on, and then stopped again; and a cook got in, red in the face and out of breath. She sat down, resting her shopping basket on her knee; a strong smell of washing-up water pervaded the bus.

It's farther than I imagined, thought Jeanne.

The mute got out and his place was taken by a coachman, who stank of the stable. The hatless girl's seat was taken by a messenger-boy with smelly feet.

The lawyer's wife felt queer and slightly sick, and was almost crying without knowing why.

Other people got in and out. The bus went on all the time

through interminable streets, pausing at the stops and going on again.

What a long way it is! said Jeanne to herself. I do hope he hasn't had a fit of absentmindedness or gone to sleep. He's been very tired these last few days.

Gradually the bus emptied and she was left absolutely alone.

The conductor shouted, "Vaugirard!" As she didn't move, he repeated, "Vaugirard!"

She looked at him, realising that his remark was addressed to her, as she was the only passenger left.

The man said for the third time, "Vaugirard!"

Then she asked, "Where are we?"

He replied in a surly tone, "We're at Vaugirard! I've just said so a dozen times!"

"Is it far from the Boulevard?"

"Which Boulevard?"

"Oh! the Boulevard des Italiens."

"We're long past that."

"Well, will you tell my husband?"

"Your husband? Where is he?"

"Why, on the top."

"On the top? There's not been anyone up top for ages."

She started up, in a panic. "What do you mean? It's impossible. He got on with me; he must be there!"

The conductor became offensive; "Look here, my girl, that's enough. He's not the only pebble on the beach. Clear out, there's nothing doing here; you'll pick up another one in the street."

Tears came into her eyes. She insisted, "But you're quite wrong, I assure you; he had a big briefcase under his arm."

The conductor laughed. "A big briefcase? Oh! yes, he got off at the Madeleine. Anyhow, he gave you the slip quite neatly, ha! ha!"

The bus had stopped at the terminus. She got out and instinctively, in spite of herself, she glanced at the top; it was entirely empty.

She began to cry, and, not realising that people could hear her and were staring, said out loud, "What will become of me?"

The terminus inspector came up. "What's the matter?"

The conductor answered ironically, "It's a lady whose husband has given her the slip on the way."

The other replied, "Oh! is that all? Never mind her—get on with your work," and he turned on his heel.

Then she began to walk straight in front of her, too frightened and dazed to know what she was doing. Where was she to go? What was she to do? There must be some mistake; he must have just forgotten or lost his memory.

She had two francs in her pocket. Who could she go to for help?

Suddenly she remembered her cousin, Barral, a deputy chief clerk at the Admiralty.

She had just enough for her cab fare and she gave the driver her cousin's address. She ran into him just as he was leaving the house for the Ministry. He was carrying, like Lebrument, a large briefcase under his arm.

She flung herself out of the cab. "Henri!" she shouted.

He stopped in surprise. "Jeanne? ... You here? ... Alone? What are you doing? Where have you come from?"

She stammered with tears in her eyes, "My husband has just disappeared."

"Disappeared? Where?"

"On a bus."

"On a bus? Oh!"

And through her tears she told her story.

He listened thoughtfully and asked, "Was he quite normal this morning?"

"Yes."

"Good! Had he much money on him?"

"Yes, the whole of my dowry."

"Your dowry? All of it?"

"Yes, every penny; he was just going to pay for his practice."

"Well, my dear cousin, I bet that at this moment he's well on the way to Belgium."

She couldn't grasp it yet; she stammered, "My husband ... you say ..."

"I'm saying he's cleared off with your ... your money—that's all there is to it."

She stood stock still, choking. At last she murmured, "Then he's ... he's a crook!"

And she collapsed, sobbing, into her cousin's arms.

As people were stopping to stare, he gently pushed her into the hall of his house and, with his arm round her waist, he led her upstairs; and when his maid, speechless with astonishment, opened the door, he said, "Sophie, just run round to the restaurant and fetch lunch for two. I shan't be going to the Ministry today."

GLADIATOR OF DUFFY'S CREEK

by
D'ARCY NILAND

WE WERE born and bred, us people, to rise before the sun. My father was a drover, always on the go, away from home for weeks at a time. I had an only sister, Bessie, much older than myself, who got married early to a cow cocky in New Zealand and went there to live. My mother toiled till the stars came out, and I with her. I got my education by candlelight and many a time my hair was singed. But on that farm, working like a horse, eating from the hand of the earth, I could not help growing big and powerful the way I wanted to be. And I had the quick eye of a bird, a swiftness of movement that often surprised me because it seemed to happen before my brain had time to tell the muscles what action to take. I could see the punches coming even before they were thrown. It was uncanny, an extra sense, that's all I can say.

So it was never any trouble for me to beat a man, from the first big navvy I downed with two hits at fifteen, right up to the last time I put the knuckles to work. I couldn't be hit, and if I was hit I couldn't be hurt. I had an unbeatable left, in and out like a snake's tongue, and a truly terrible right that I never at any time used to the full for fear of killing a man. I felt like a god at the business; all so natural to me. It's in you or it's not. There's been nobody like me in these parts for years, if ever. In fact, I doubt if there was a man in the world who could have stood up to me in my prime.

You can go back and tell Sydney that; it's the truth.

There was never a more popular feller, either. Everybody liked me and thought the world of me, for I was never anyone but myself: straight, gentle and kind and helpful, but a man

It gives a man a good feeling to be thought a great fighter

nevertheless. I'm not counting the envious and the jealous. Everybody's got them. But envy and jealousy are a pat on your back, too, if you look at them the right way.

When my people died, within a month of each other, and the farm was sold up, I got a job as a blacksmith's striker and went to live in the town. I made it my home and the people my family.

I only ever had one real mate, Ironbark Doyle, but he went sour on me. We fell out, and he wouldn't talk to me for fifty years. Over the simplest thing it was, too—me trying to do something good for him and his family. The start of it was down at The Nag's Head one Saturday afternoon.

There was a fat little whiskey-pot named O'Shannessy running the place at the time, and he was one of the best. But he had a cranky old mother that would give you a pain in the

neck with her miserable scheming ways: short-changing you and making you feel a shameful meanie when you brought her attention to it; and giving you a short beer with a head on it like Shakespeare's collar, and grinding words at you with her teeth when you pointed it out.

If looks could kill, that old woman would be doing ninety-nine years for murdering the lot of us over and over. She had a little mouth like a bent safety-pin and eyes that could lift a penny off the floor with the power of their hunger for money. Nothing pleased her more than to see the bar full of spenders. Not that the joy told on her face. That part of the creature never changed its appearance of steel and stone.

This day me and Ironbark, Creepy Murphy and a few others were sitting in the back bar having a yarn when Ironbark's kid, Jimmy, barefooted in, looking nervously all around him, and said to his father, "Mum wants ya."

"Get out of here," Ironbark said roughly, "before you're run in."

"She said to come home straight away."

Ironbark was speechless with embarrassment. He didn't know which way to look.

"If you don't," Jimmy said, hurrying the words out as he moved away, "she said she's going back to Broken Hill and taking us with her."

Ironbark blew his top. "You tell her to go and boil her head. I'll come home when I'm ready."

It took us half an hour and several drinks to calm Ironbark down. He raged something woeful. Fancy sending a kid to get him, and into the pub at that; and who did she think she was ordering about? I said to him all women worried, and he must know that. It was a humiliation, he said, and if there was anything he hated it was being shown up. He stayed another two hours in defiance and spite. By that time he was the worse for wear, and I went home with him, he leaning on me.

Ironbark started to sing when he saw the lights on in the house. He dragged me inside. He tried to act as though nothing had happened, but he got the cold shoulder good and proper. The kids all sat quiet looking accusingly at him. His wife banged saucepans in the kitchen and would have kicked him flying if he'd been a dead rat on the lino. The storm was brewing and then it broke. Ironbark lost his head and started to abuse her. She told him flat she was leaving next day and going back to Broken Hill to her mother, the

five kids, the two cats, and the budgerigar and all. It wasn't bluff; she meant it, and Ironbark knew she did.

He quietened a bit, but he was still furious. "Just because a man has a few drinks."

"A few drinks!" she shouted. "We've been here three months, and you live in that pub."

"Well, what about it? I've given you the best years of my life. I work like a bastard. I've never ill-treated you or the kids. You never pulled stunts like this at the Hill."

"There you had a job, a good job in the mines. We had regular money. Why you left it to come here I'll never know."

"I told you . . . because I was fed up with the life there. I wanted a change. And this is my town, where I was born and raised . . . where my family live."

"This is your family," she said. "Me and that lot there."

"I'm talking about my own people," Ironbark said. "My mother and father and sister—"

"And old mother Shannessy, don't forget her," his wife said sarcastically.

"She's only a bloody distant cousin," Ironbark shot back.

"Distant, huh! That's a laugh. A bar-counter between you, that's how distant, and her on the taking end. Rotten stinking town, I hate it!"

"It's a good town, and I can work here as well as anywhere."

"A labourer!" she snorted. "When there's work or when you feel like it."

"Well, give me a chance, willya? There's such a thing as settling down."

"So I wait, trying to run a house, look after children, while you drink your head off, taking the food out of our mouths. Not on your life, mister. This is the end."

The kids started crying like a lot of organ pipes. And she started to sob, too. And looking at them all they got through to me, right into my heart. So I started to act the peacemaker. I talked, and they listened to me. I put my hand on Ironbark's shoulder, told him we were mates, and to see the break-up of a lovely family twisted a knife in me. I made a beautiful speech. I pointed out how long they had been together, and how much they all needed each other and what a wonderful thing family life was. Poor old Ironbark—he started to cry like a baby, and that was a tribute to the effect of my talk. Ironbark crying, that tough man. You couldn't get Ironbark to cry if you rubbed his eyes with a cut onion.

He seemed to see himself as a terrible demon, and I never intended that. He put sackcloth and ashes on his head till his wife found herself defending him against himself, denying his remarks to soothe his tortured spirit.

"Dominic," he begged me in bitter anguish, his knuckles going white with the grip on my shoulders, "if you ever see me in that pub again I want you to take me and beat the bloody daylights out of me."

"I don't mind a drink now and then," his wife said relentingly. "That's all right."

"No!" yelped Ironbark. "Never another drop. As long as I breathe."

So they made up, and Ironbark was as good as his word for a month. I didn't see him at all during that time. Then, one day, I went into The Nag and there he was at the bar-counter, with one or two, and Shannessy's mother serving them. I went up with a smile, but he gave me a look that shocked me.

I smiled again and put my hand on his shoulder, "Come on, mate," I said, "you're out of bounds."

He swung his shoulder away. "Go to hell," he said.

Shannessy's mother gave me the full benefit of her glare. "Don't start trouble here," she said. "Leave him alone."

"You made a promise, Ironbark," I said. "What about that?"

Ironbark turned on me. "Who do you think you are?" he said. "Policing me around."

"I'm not policing you, mate. But you said—"

"Never mind what I said. Mind your own business."

I looked at him smouldering. And I looked at Shannessy's mother, her eyes glinting with satisfaction.

"What right have you got," she said, "stepping into other people's lives?"

"Yeah," Ironbark said, facing me. "Making a gutless cissy out of me in front of my family. Don't think I haven't been thinking about it. I could squirm every time I bring it to mind. You should have been a priest. And that's the joke—all right for you to get your gutful and play around the big I Am."

"If he wants to drink here," Shannessy's mother said, "you let him."

I woke up. "You old biddy," I said. "You missed his money, didn't you, and you've been plugging his ear and his

brain full of poison because it didn't suit you to see him at home with his wife and children rather than here spending the last penny in his pocket."

"He told me where he's been for the last month, and how you dragged the promise out of him, and it's like your cheek."

"I tell you what to do," Ironbark said. "You stay away from my sister, too. I should never have introduced you."

"What's that got to do with this?" I said.

"You stay away from her or I'll tell her all about your other women."

"What other women? You know Kate is the only one."

"The ones in the clover I'm talking about," Ironbark said. "The tarts."

"I'm a man," I told him.

"A stallion," Ironbark said. He took another gulp of beer. "And I'll tell her what a boozer you are, too. What you can put away. You won't look so good."

"Sure, I can put it away," I said. "I'm a drinking man."

"Well, don't drink with me," he said, and turned away. I stood there, trying to understand him, wondering what to do.

"Ironbark," I said. "You told me if I caught you in this pub again to beat the daylights out of you, remember?"

He spun around, infuriated. "You think you can fight. All you can do is skite. You're the biggest skiter in this town. In fact, you're the greatest I've ever come across."

The blokes at the bar started to move away from him.

"I only know the truth, Ironbark," I told him. "And the truth is all I tell, whether it's about me or anyone else."

"There you go!" he said in a high-pitched voice. "That's you all over. Listen, I beat men at the Hill who could lay you out in a flash. I was the king of the mitts there. You didn't know that, did you? No, because I don't skite. You come out the back and I'll show you."

I shook my head. "I don't want to fight you, Ironbark," I said.

"You don't or you won't?" he sneered.

"It wouldn't be right. We're mates."

"Not any more, we're not. You're yellow, that's what you are."

"You know my ability," I said.

"From your own big trap, yeah. I've yet to see you go."

"You know my reputation then," I said.

He snapped his fingers. "Pig's eye to your reputation! Get your hands up now, you big bull artist."

I looked hard at him. "It's no good, Ironbark, you can say what you like, I'm not going to fight you. I don't want it on my conscience that I hurt you and took you from your work when your family needs every penny you can make."

"By golly!" Ironbark said. "That does it!"

He swung two punches at me, but I wasn't there. He missed with the next four. I didn't want the place wrecked, or the police called, so I clipped him on the chin as gently as I could, put him across my shoulders and carried him out. He was in bed for a week with a singing head and concussion; and I paid the doctor's bill and gave his wife money on the quiet till he was on his feet again.

That was the end of our mateship. I was sorry, but I let it go. On Ironbark's part, though, it was a feud. Whatever he could do to hurt me he did. I was gall in his mouth. I never drank again at The Nag. I made a point of going in when the bar was crowded and dressing down Shannessy's mother, saying in a gentlemanly way that she didn't deserve, that I was leaving hell for heaven in the shape of The Crown and Anchor; and not only would I not recommend The Nag but I would go out of my way to knock it and direct custom to the new pub of my choice, which was happy to have probably the best customer in the town, both as drinker himself and one who brought the trade in because of his popularity.

Two weeks after the affair with Ironbark, Creepy Murphy, who's every bit like a cockroach the way he scurries about with his head this way and that, came into the smithy to see me. Creepy drops gossip like crumbs, but this wasn't gossip.

He said, "Kate Doyle's in town. She said to tell you she's not coming to the dance tonight."

I gave him the price of three drinks, and I thought in anger: Well, if that's the way things are, I'll stop this tantrum dead in its tracks before it goes any farther. After work I went in the gig out to her place. She lived with her mother and father, two nice old people. I knew them to speak to long before I knew Kate, who most of her time was down at a boarding-school in Sydney. Now she was home looking after them. There was a close family link between the Doyles.

Kate was sitting in the wicker chair on the veranda, knitting, the last sunlight shining on her golden hair. She had blue eyes and lips like a cherry and made you ache all over with desire and filled you with pleasure to look at her. It was long past the time when I wanted to own her and put my brand

on her in a way that would chain her to me willingly for life.

I knew by her face, as I went down the violet-bordered path, that Ironbark had been hard at work. She started to look defiant, ready for a have-it-out jag. But that wasn't for me.

"Kate," I said. "I'm not going to beat around the bush with you. I don't know what you've been hearing about me from Ironbark and I don't care. You're twenty-three and you can make up your own mind. I'm twenty-seven, and in three months' time I'll own the business where I work. If you want to throw a good man away, that's your mistake."

"It was simply dreadful what you did to Ironbark," she said. "You might have killed him. Leaving a widow and all those poor children."

"I've told you I want to marry you."

"I wouldn't care to be the wife of a drunk, thank you."

"I've told you for the last time, Kate."

"To say nothing of being attached to the toy of any woman's wiles. I would be stupid."

"If you want me," I said, "you get your backside out of that chair and be at my place at eight o'clock tonight and we'll go round and see the priest about the marriage." Half way down the path I turned. "If you're not there you can say goodbye to me for ever. We're finished. I'll get somebody else who trusts and loves me, and I won't have to try hard to do it, either."

I jumped in the gig and galloped like fury.

She was there all right, behind a gentle knock on the door at half-past seven, not eight. She was scared and quiet and submissive. She didn't say a word, just came into my arms and held on like pincers as though I was leaving for the moon.

We went down to Sydney for our honeymoon and stayed at a hotel in King's Cross. We had a grand time. We went to the theatres and concerts. And for walks; several times around the harbour front to Mrs. Macquarie's Chair. Is that walk still there? What a beautiful harbour that is. I've never seen anything like it.

One day I went and bought a whole new outfit of clothes. I didn't know myself. I was the best-dressed man in Duffy's Creek when I got back, and Kate, too, was a ball of style. People used to stop and stare openly at us as we walked along. They all admired us.

Not Ironbark, though. His animosity was even deeper. He hated me for marrying his sister, and he thought the worst

of her for going against him. He cut her out of his life, not speaking or having anything to do with her. I think it even gave him some satisfaction when our first-born, a boy, lived only three days, and Kate couldn't have any more children, but I don't know. It's a hard bitter thing to say of a man. And I don't know.

Not long afterwards the most beautiful specimen of manhood I ever saw, barring myself, came on a visiting tour. This feller was called The Great Samson, and he was a strong man. He wore a frockcoat lined with scarlet, a belltopper, a waistcoat with gold buttons, and he carried a cane. He had shoulders the width of a door, a fine face like rosy glass, and a Kitchener moustache. Nobody thought him peculiar, only distinguished and impressive. It was a sight to see him in the street, and he had a nod and a smile for everybody.

The Great Samson was on at the Town Hall, and we went to see him bending iron bars, smashing bricks with his bare hands, lifting a platform massed with men and lying on a bed of nails while a man with a fourteen-pound hammer broke rocks on his sixty-inch chest. He was a marvel to look at. I can't say how much I admired him. His stomach muscles were like six hardboiled eggs under the skin. His arms and legs were looped with muscle like the bulges in a sausage balloon. His neck was like a tree trunk. I thought I'd like to meet him and shake his hand, but I never got the chance until I got it another way ...

I was doing a bit of talking in The Crown and Anchor one evening when there was a great rude raspberry to the back of me, and I turned in time to hear a voice say, "You're a great big windbag."

It belonged to a stranger, a hefty joker. I was hurt. It does hurt to be misunderstood. I told him, "I'm not blowing, mister, just stating a few facts to my friends here."

"A great big fat double-yolked windbag!" he sneered.

I got up and walked over to him. "I don't think much of your breeding or your manners," I said. "And you're too long in the tooth to rehabilitate yourself now. So I pity you."

"Get ripped!" he said.

"What's more," I said. "You're unintelligent. You always want to pick your mark carefully if you want to get cheeky. You don't know who you're picking on in me."

"And how it worries me," he said. "I know who I am; that's enough. Do you know who I am, breeze-shooter?

Two years ago I was heavyweight champion of the Pacific coast." He waited. "You hear that?"

"I heard it," I said. "But you're in Duffy's Creek now, and here I'm the champion. I must ask you to apologise for your language which was uncalled for and shows no respect for yourself or for me."

He swung at me and they carried him out. And among those helping was Ironbark, and I knew then he had put the man up to having a shot at me.

Creepy Murphy was tugging my arm, and he seemed hardly able to speak for the excited fear in him, "Do you know who that was? That was the Great Samson's nephew . . . he's with the troupe. Migord, Dominic, what's gonna happen now?"

It wasn't long before we knew. The pub hushed up like a cathedral and all eyes except mine were on the door. By watching the eyes I could follow the progress of The Great Samson, but I sat still with my back to him. Then he was at my elbow, in his belltopper and frockcoat.

"My nephew is in hospital with a broken jaw," said he in a clipped voice, his eyes hard with anger. "I believe you did it."

"I own to that," I said.

"Well, now, rise up," said he, "and try grips with a man."

I told him that was uncalled for, and besides I was one of his greatest fans.

He carefully took off his hat, then his frockcoat, and gave them to an eager man to hold. He started rolling up his sleeves, delicately taking out the golden cuff-links and placing them in his pocket.

"I don't appreciate your taking advantage of your superior power over a lesser man somewhat under the influence and who happens to be recovering from a broken right arm." He took off his bow-tie and undid his collar. "I could take such advantage, too, but I never do. I never pick on the weak and unfit, but I do, with relish, on the brute and the bully."

I told him how his nephew had come in and what he did, and I said the bar would back me up. He maintained I shouldn't have been so violent. A kick in the pants, a hand on the scruff and out with the feller through the door—that would have been sufficient.

"But I know your kind," he said. "At heart you're sadists who love the chance to demonstrate your prowess because it feeds your ego when you triumph. I call upon you to step out."

I stood up. "Well, Mr. Samson," I said. "With the greatest respect I want to say that you are doing me a wrong. At the same time I admire you for standing up for your nephew. I'd rather not fight you because I don't want to be the one to wreck your career, even temporarily. But you have put me on my mettle and my mother never reared a jib. So lead on out the back."

The backyard was filled with men, full of sound like a southerly in the trees. They made a space for us where the radiance from the one electric light globe was strongest.

I said to The Great Samson, "Just one thing—are you sure I am not taking advantage of you?"

He smiled a little. "Hardly," he said.

"But you're a strong man," I said. "Not a fighter."

"You'll find me in the record books," he said.

I went easy with Samson because I really didn't want to hurt him. But he was all out to get me. Hit hit hard and fast. In the clinches he would claim my arms and I thought he was trying to snap them at the wrist. I had to let myself go. But honest to God, it hurt me when I broke his nose, and I could have wept when his ribs cracked. Breaking up a beautiful man like that. It was pitiable to see his marvellous eyes all bunged up, and the fine cheeks split. The saddest feeling I ever had was when he fell in the dust like a shot bullock, shuddering all through his flesh and lifting up his face all splashed with blood. Then he was unconscious.

I wouldn't let the others touch him. I picked him up myself, carried him into the bar and brought him round. I told him how sorry I was and how we must get him to a doctor straight away for medical attention. But he restrained me, shaking his head and smiling. He was a tough man. He put out his hand then and squeezed mine till I thought the bones would break, but I didn't care, I was so pleased. Creepy brought him a drink, not forgetting to sample it first.

"How many fights have you had?"

"I've never kept count. But it runs into a great number."

"Ever been beaten?"

"Not yet," I said.

"You must come to America with me."

The pub gasped. "You don't need to kid me, Mr. Samson," I said.

"I'm not kidding you, man. You're a find. And I know what I'm talking about. I was trained by William Muldoon that trained the great John L., and Muldoon told me I was

better than Sullivan. Mace praised me, and Fitzsimmons. But I decided there was more to be made by me in capitalising on my other endowments, and so I turned in boxing and became a strong man. But I'm telling you, you would have wiped the floor with Sullivan. And you weren't even extended in beating me, were you?"

"Not really. There was no need to be."

"Mr. McCausland," The Great Samson said, "you're a gentleman. Do you know what a gentleman is? A gentleman is a man who is so secure in his own strength that he is gentle to *me*."

"You're one yourself," I told him.

"Thank you kindly," he said, and laughed. "When two gentlemen meet, Mr. McCausland, it is perhaps the nearest to heaven they will ever get. Now you certainly must come back with me."

"No," I said. "It's kind of you, but I have no wish to be a prizefighter—and besides I don't want to leave Duffy's Creek. I'm happy here."

"Well, I'm sorry," he said. "I think you could be champion of the world in a year if not sooner. I haven't seen a man yet that I think could beat you. Nor do I know of one."

That was fifty years ago.

For some time afterwards fight managers were coming here to Duffy's Creek to look me up and try to get me to go with them. They came from Brisbane and Sydney and Melbourne; and one was an American from Chicago. That's one thing about The Great Samson: he was generous, and he spread my name and told how I had beaten him. He was, in truth, a real gentleman.

But I wasn't interested in getting into a ring and hurting men for money. That's all I could tell them, these people, and that was the truth. They offered big sums. They promised the world. But I can say I was never tempted. They struck me as a hungry greedy lot, eager to make a pile out of the working bullock, then let him go looking for grass on his own. Most were polite, but some abused me for a numbskull. Some taunted me. They said I was a big frog in a little puddle; that I'd rather think I was good and live with the image of my greatness than take the risk of proving myself to be otherwise.

What they said didn't worry me. I was happy. I had a

good business and it went on for a long time until slowly the motor car killed it. Horses and buggies and sulkies and drays were going out of fashion. I put off my men one by one; and one morning I went down to work and stood alone in that old barn of a building, chinked with daylight, looking around me. The shop was empty where it used to be full of vehicles. The shafts of sunlight that pierced the cracks in the weatherboard—they used to be smoky blue like the sheen on a plum and swimming with specks of soot; now they were as clear as honey. The fire was dead, the bellows still, the anvil silent. It was just as if I had said goodbye to one brand of civilisation and was waiting for another to come.

I turned at the sound of footsteps. Old Charlie Wallace shuffled up to me. He was my signwriter, only a painter of sulkies, but the best there was. He put out his hand and said goodbye; he was going north in the bus to take a job with his brother in a sawmill at Lantern Point. And he had started with the business, long before I came. He went out, and I looked down at his footsteps in the dirt, all that he left behind of forty years in that place. He was gone with the old civilisation, too.

There was nothing to do but sell out. And it's funny the way things happen. While Kate and I were wondering what we might do, with all sorts of irons in the fire, I received word that my sister had died in New Zealand and left her property to me. So we went over there just to sort things out and have a look around, but we liked the country so much that we settled down and stayed for twenty years on that farm in the Waikato.

Kate passed away there, quietly, one evening last summer. It knocked me for a bit. Then I decided once more to sell up and get out.

Three months ago I came back here to Duffy's Creek. No good reason, I suppose. I first saw the light here, that's all; it's always been my town and I might as well bed down here when I go. But you know, it was all so changed. New buildings, or the old done up, roads widened, houses gone, paddocks built on. My old blacksmith's shop had been pulled down; there's a swanky garage on the corner now.

And you know, I found I'd been forgotten. I walked up and down the street. Nobody recognised me; all busy, going about their business. I saw hardly anybody I knew. It was a new generation. A few old fellers like myself sitting on a seat under a peppercorn tree hailed me, but they had only

been acquaintances in the long ago. They had nothing for me then and less for me now: meeting on that seat every day, carving up the world and gossiping about their ills and aches, waiting for time to go by. Old as I am, I didn't fit in with them.

Down near the post office I recognised Ironbark, but when I went up and said good day, he just gave me a long stare, grumped, and walked off, with a stick to help him now—an old man in a shabby overcoat. His wife is gone, too, and his children scattered. Seeing him, and him still that way towards me, churned me up. I went back to the room I had in a guest house run by a squabbling family and sat on the bed.

You ever take out photographs of yourself at all ages? You'll find there are seven. Baby, young boy, youth, young man, middle-aged man, elderly man, old man. Look at them and you might have a job believing they're not seven different people. They're not, though. Seven people, and you're all of them, every one. It's queer but it's true. And you can look back and see yourself at every stage. One thing about me—I don't look quite my age. I'm still straight, still strong, and pretty fit. I never let myself go to seed. I won't either. I'll still be kicking in my coffin.

Last week—and I'm coming to what brought you here—I was down in Shannessy's pub, sitting on the form, having a quiet one. Shannessy has gone, that decent fat little feller, taken by a stroke; and his cranky old mother, of course, has been running hell these many years now. But the place is the same, except it's been done up a good bit and the pictures of sportsmen that were around the walls, they're all gone.

As I was sitting there something went down the street with a roar like a jet plane and stopped. I looked through the window. It was only one of those little red cars like a bug. Four young fellers climbed out of it and came into the pub. They had long hair, tight trousers, coloured jackets and cheeky looks. I just heard them order their beers, and I took no further notice of them. But by and by their talk got a bit louder, and they were laughing among themselves.

Then I heard one of them say, "What goes on in this dump, anyway?"

"Sweet nothing," the barman said.

They laughed. "Hey, used to be a bloke here years ago, they reckon, who could have laid out Liston and Clay on the same night."

"Well, that wouldn't have been hard, would it?" the barman

said. "Those two! I even done a fiver cold on that fight."

"Is it right, though?"

"Could have been, mate," the barman said. "I wouldn't know. I'm new here."

"Some nong told us in the last town, but he couldn't remember the name."

"They never can," the barman said. "Probably someone shooting you a line. You'd be surprised at the bulldust you get in these places, and it's not all out in the paddocks."

"Where are you from, mate?"

"Sydney," the barman said. "Balmain. And I'm going through in a coupla weeks, back there. I've had the bush. It's strictly for the birds. Where are you blokes heading?"

"Brisbane. Surfer's Paradise first. Talking of birds—they reckon they're laid on there."

They all laughed at the joke.

I got up and went over to them. "Excuse me butting in, boys," I said, "but I heard you asking about a great fighter in these parts. Well, I thought you might be interested to know I'm the one you're talking about—Dominic McCausland."

They all showed interest and suspicious surprise. "You don't say, Pop," one said.

"I do say," I said. "Nobody could hold a candle to me and what you heard was right."

They laughed again. "Good on you, Dominic. Meet the boys." The tall one said this and rattled off names and we all shook hands. "Let's have a drink."

"I'll be glad to have a drink in your company," I said.

The barman got the drinks. As he was doing so I saw Ironbark come in and go down the bar and stand at the counter.

"You know something, Dad," the tall feller said. "There's an old crumb in Sydney comes up to you in the pub and talks you blind about what he was and what he used to do. Cricket, football, boxing, he was fab. He'll keep going for hours as long as you keep feeding him booze. Catch on?"

I didn't say anything. Instead, I put down the money for the beers as they were placed on the counter.

The tall feller looked a bit taken aback, but the others hoorayed, and he just shrugged.

"Who'd you ever beat, Pop?" the short chunky one said in a kind of challenging way, and I didn't miss the sly wink he gave his mates.

"What are you winking for?" I said.

"Nothing, nothing," he said, grinning, "Just got an eyeful of soot, that's all. Come on, give us a rundown."

"That would take hours," I said. "Believe me, it would take hours to reel off the names—even if I could remember them all—and give you the history of each fight I had. One of the best judges going told me I could have wiped the floor with Sullivan."

"What Sullivan? Who's Sullivan?"

"You never heard of John L. Sullivan?" I said. "One of the great champions of all time."

"You know, Chick," the chunky one said, laughing. "Errol Flynn beat him. We seen it on the telly."

"So we did, son," this Chick, the tall one said, slapping his mate on the back in great humour. "You're dead right. He was stringing you, Pop."

"Who was stringing me?" I said.

"The nut that said you could take Sullivan."

"He was anything but a nut," I said. "He was a decent man who wouldn't say what he didn't mean. Besides I think I could have whipped Sullivan. Listen, I beat four men in here one night. They came from a circus in town and got out of hand. One was in hospital for a week. Nobody had any hope with me, I can tell you that for sure."

"Are you in the record books?"

"I never fought professionally."

"Why not, when you were so good?"

"I had reasons."

"Ah," the tall one said. "You old blokes are all alike. Let's have another drink."

"What do you mean?" I said. "All alike?"

"How old would you be?"

"I'm seventy-six," I said. "What do you mean by all alike?"

"You dig up your past and ladle it out. You have yourselves on. You've been telling yarns about yourself for so long you've come to believe them. All these feats and exploits, who's to prove 'em? You old blokes think you can get away with murder. You're safe, you think, and so you are. But you always make the mistake of overdoing it when you tell your lies. All you do is build a great heap of bull. What do you think we are, Dad?"

"I don't know what you are," I said. "But I don't like your tone of voice or what you say. There's no need to be

offensive. Still, I'm a charitable man and if you sincerely can't believe me then I can't help it, can I?"

"Four blokes in one night!" the chunky one said.

"You could ask that man standing down there," I said. "He was present."

They looked at Ironbark, and the tall one called out the question; and their eyes were on Ironbark and they were quiet as they waited for the answer. All Ironbark did was curl his lip, half turn his back and go back to his beer. The tall one looked at me, and I could see the amused contempt in all their faces.

"What do you take us for, Joe—bunnies? Who do you think you're putting it over? We're not nuts, you know. We're with it all the way. Why don't you go and blow your bugle somewhere else?"

I went back to the form and sat down. They went on drinking. I wasn't put out. Who cared about the attitude of four young toughs whose opinion didn't matter a scrap? I knew what I said was true; that was enough.

In a little while I decided to go, but went out the back first. As I was about to leave the urinal they started to come in. The tall one stretched his legs and arms across the entrance blocking my way.

"Crawl underneath, Dad," he said.

"Come on," I said. "Don't act the goat. Let me past."

Then they all blocked the entrance. The chunky one said, "That's a nice tie you're wearing, Pop. Where'd you get it? The bargain bazaar?"

"I'd like to get past," I said.

"How much money you got on you?" the chunky one said.

"Come on," I said. "Move away."

"Cost you a quid, Dad. No, make it a couple."

"Just let me go."

"Why, mister mighty guy," the tall one said, grinning, "what'll you do if we don't? Take us on one after the other?"

I looked hard at him, not quite sure if he was just teasing me or deliberately provoking me to action. "Not one after another," I said. "That wouldn't be fair. All together."

They shouted with laughter, and the tall one said, "Listen to the old bum, willya! Still kidding himself." He grabbed my lapels. "Come on, fork over and you won't get hurt."

I'm not sure how long the fight lasted, but it wasn't long. Maybe three or four minutes. It was like a hurricane, come

and gone in a flash. I was on the black lounge settee in the parlour, people all around. I just felt tired. I heard someone say, "Has anybody gone for the doctor?"

Then I heard another voice that I recognised as Ironbark's, "Never mind the doctor, get the priest."

I looked at him standing there, a real devilish glee in his face.

"Priest, doctor, nothing," I said. "I'm all right."

"You look it," Ironbark said, "with your lips split, your nose wrecked and your eyes black as sin. They made a punching-bag out of you. You old bastard, you're slipping."

"That's enough out of you, Ironbark," I said.

"They're out there waiting for you, you old goat," Ironbark said. "The whole four of 'em. Where's your guts, lying there like an old moll! You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"They are not," I said.

"They are so, too," Ironbark said. "You cur dog, running away."

I lifted my shoulders, tired and aching, and tried to get my legs on to the floor, but there was a trembling all through them as though all the nerves had been cut to shreds.

"Just tell them to hang on," I said. "I'll be all right."

A young policeman pushed me back and lifted my legs back on to the couch. He turned to Ironbark, "What's the caper, what the hell do you think you're up to?" he snarled. "You mug urger." He looked down at me. "Take it easy, old-timer," he said.

"No," I said. "I never ran out on a fight in my life."

"Listen," he said. "There's four blokes out there, flatter than yesterday's beer. All over the place like rag dolls. The ambulance is coming. Who do you want to fight now?"

He seemed concerned and agitated. He moved the crowd back. Then he looked around at me, and I closed my eyes to let him know my future intentions were peaceable. And I heard him say, "I dunno, it's got me licked. All I can say is that old joker certainly must have been good in his time."

"Good!" I heard Ironbark say, and I opened my eyes to see him standing there with tears running down his face. "Man, you don't know just how good. And you never will know," he shouted fiercely. "None of you." He was staring at them with a kind of violence.

"Hey, Ironbark," I said. "Cut it out, will you? You're making a terrible fool of yourself . . . all these people looking at you and that. You'll only regret it—"

"Shut up, I know what I'm doing," Ironbark said, still facing the crowd. His lips trembled. "We had the champion of the world in this town, and we've got him in this room right now, in the last years of his life, the greatest natural born fighter that ever threw a punch!"

Ironbark turned, knuckling the tears out of his eyes but they came again. He shuffled over to me, and he was panting, and that's all you could hear in the quietness. He put out his hand.

"Put it there, Dominic," he said.

But I didn't take his hand. He had wronged me, and there had never been a man like him to hold a grudge; and he was lonely now, and on his own, and how could I be sure he wasn't just being selfish, coming back to me when there was no-one else left?

"Do it for me, Dominic," he said in anguish. "Do me the favour, mate, that I couldn't ever begin to deserve. Shake my hand and bury the past and all I've done and been to you. All those wasted years when we could have been mates only for me and my pride. Don't think I haven't felt the loss of them, or hated myself for being what I am...or that I haven't wanted to make it up with you before today."

Who wanted him going on like that? We shook.

It was in the papers all over Australia, that dust-up; they tell me—and people heard it over the wireless. Everybody shakes my hand along the street, or pats me on the back, or says something nice. A group of women artists came up yesterday off a bus, and one of them wanted to paint me. She said I had hair like combed smoke, and the lines in my face were like creases in iron, she said. How do you like that? She said I looked like a retired gladiator. Some of these women have got imaginations, no doubt about it. The mayor and aldermen are giving me a dinner next week and I'm to tell them all about the days that are gone. It should be good and I'm looking forward to it more than I can say. It gives a man a nice warm feeling to be thought something of. It always did. Like you coming up here.

For it's a long way from Sydney, boy, and a long way back—and I am, I can tell you, real flattered to know you made the journey just for the sake of seeing me and doing a story for your Sunday paper. I hope it turns out all right. Give my regards and blessings to the old place, especially the Cross. We had a grand time there.

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Business as much as usual

by **B. L. JACOT**

THE man in the Tyrolean hat was reclining against a mudguard, breathing on his nails and polishing them on the narrow lapel of his hound's-tooth hacking-jacket: his trousers close-fitting as the tissue jacket of a drinking straw.

On either side were secondhand cars with giant chalk figures on the windscreens and painted signs, more permanent, such as *Snip of the Week.* Somewhere at the back, unseen under the arches, was the spider in charge of the lot.

The man in the oversize bowler paused as he passed the lot to kick at a tyre and poke his head inside a car to look at the mileage laughingly shown on the speedo. This was a street of busy market stalls selling anything from puppy dogs and canaries to old opera cloaks.

"They should have a salesman out in the street to try to sell a job like this old turkey?"

"A car like this sells itself, guv'nor. You like a run round the houses?"

"I've seen worse jobs," the man in the bowler admitted. "Not many, though—and I've seen a lot."

The salesman eased himself off the mudguard. Around him, coats were being turned inside-out to examine linings

and the interiors of hats inspected. "Should I trouble to answer with a car like this that sells itself? If you're not interested, how come anyone is here asking questions—unless his head should want examining?"

"You walk along minding your own business and this thing you fall over in the street. That should be interest, is it?" The man in the Tyrolean hat said nothing.

"How come you got it here?" the prospect asked sharply.

"You think I push it here from Epping where I live?"

"Who knows where you live? Round the corner here, likely. An easy push."

"With a car that runs like new, even! And he don't wonder how I should get the engine warm."

The man in the bowler felt the radiator. "To be hot yet it should boil when it runs. And someone, you tell me, snitches the spare tyre, isn't it?" He closed the boot.

"With new tyres like this job's got you should want a spare wheel!"

"I see the inner tubes are good. At least the bits that show through the covers."

"Start the engine. Hear it run. Smooth as silk. And why? I'll tell you why. A replacement. Not run in yet. This is an old man who just died. And like for years all he done before he croaked was to take his old china round the houses on a Sunday afternoon. All the week he's busy in the shop. Mileage nominal, guv'nor. And serviced from new by the place where he bought it—up West. I can't see why you stand there chewing the fat about a job like *this*."

"I suppose if you can get it pushed here I could get it pushed away again. One-seventy."

"Now I know who makes the jokes. A car that will fetch two-and-a-half in the trade any time."

"I said one-seventy."

"You should be shouting! Please keep the voice down. You do me a damage round here with such talk."

"My wife she isn't feeling well lately."

"That I can understand."

"I should take her for a run now and then in the country. You want I shouldn't do that for her, at her age and sick?"

"This job stands us in at two-fifty."

"We all make mistakes."

"Look you wanna try this round the block?"

"Me? I don't take risks like that with also an old father to support and four children."

"Four kids," the salesman recorded. "An old mosher and his sick wife. And he buys them a car! Oi-oi! A good citizen. Him driving this lovely car with his wife by his side and the mosher in the back with the kids. As the neighbours come out to look, he raises his hat—so."

"One-eighty, but don't tell my wife. She's sick."

"A car that will fetch two-narf in the trade. I think you lost your mind with your troubles. Maybe when your wife is better and the old mosher—"

"Insults he gives me! To make business he gives insults. Three generations yet, my children, me and my mosher!"

"Look I don't insult no-one. I gotta Mom and I think a lot of my mom. She thinks a lotta me. She thinks I'm a good fella so I'll let it go to you for two-two-five. There."

"I make it two hundred since you show you are a well-raised boy. For your old mom's sake I make it two hundred."

"Look, Charlie boy! All right you gotta sick wife and I got a mom that thinks I'm the cat's whiskers. But let's not get hysterical. You gotta mosher who likes a ride in a good car—like this is a good car. Don't he work hard all his life and he never gets to having no car for himself. Don't he get entitled to pleasure in his old age? For the sake of your old mosher I make it—for you—two-one-five. It's criminal but I do it."

"For you, for the sake of your old mom who works her fingers to the bone, I make it two-ten."

"You want my momma in the poorhouse yet?"

"Forget the poorhouse. What I'm giving is two hundred and five. For luck . . . What? Is this me I hear saying two hundred and five?" He smacked the side of his head. "Oi! Oi! That the mosher should see me now!"

The salesman did not deign to make direct reply. He addressed a postman who was trying to push his way through the crowds. "If I should say to this *goyim*: 'All right . . . two-ten,' I wouldn't want anyone to be hearing such foolishness. But I say it. So. *Two-ten* and no need to call the cops. I just ain't feeling well."

"Get lost!" the postman urged and shook him off.

"Maybe you don't hear so well either. I said two-five."

"You want to make a stand-up fight about a fiver? With a car like this—one owner? Worth two-seventy like it says in the Buyer's Guide?"

"So now we are back at the start?" the bowler hat said

crisply and something in the tone registered with the other.

"Something tells me you haven't the price of the deposit, chum. Are you kidding?"

"It tells you right, boy. You think I should want to buy a turkey like this one? Me—I just want to see how far I can drag a smart cookie like you down. No offence."

He wandered off beyond the eel stall and just as the young man in the Tyrolean titfer sank back to polish his nails again, a woman bustled up and threw her shopping bag in the back of the car they had been battling over.

"You think I park my car here to make a public seat?" she asked, and drove off leaving the young man spinning like a top.

"You dancing on the pavement?" a citizen with a black beard asked.

"Naw," the young man said. "I was trying to get that old turnip up to two hundred or bust." He sauntered off back towards his own stall that was selling vegetables.

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Goodbye for ever and ever and ever

THEY didn't stop outside her apartment house—but, for safety's sake, about two hundred yards farther up Istenhegyi Road, just behind a curve. The young man put on the handbrake but left the engine running in neutral, hoping that they would soon finish with the final goodbyes. In the afternoon when they went into the espresso for their last talk he told her that he had a sore throat, didn't want to sit too close. Before the date, at home, he ate a fair-sized piece of homemade garlic sausage which gave him another excuse for keeping his distance—and up to now he had succeeded in avoiding any intimate contact. Now she held out her hand.

"Well, then, 'bye."

"'Bye," he said, keeping his voice low and hoarse as though his throat were choked with grief. For a moment he thought that this was really the end; after all, they'd discussed everything. But she didn't pull back her hand, she just stared dreamily into the spring dusk; then suddenly she leaned close to him and kissed him.

He drew back a little behind the wheel. "You know I've got a bad cold . . . You'll catch it . . ."

"So?" she shook her hair and removed her tiny hat. "I'm not afraid; when I cough, I'll be thinking of you . . ." And she bent over him again, thirstily, as though she would never want to break away.

by FERENC KARINTHY

The young man felt it was impossible to draw back now; in order to make the time pass, while the kiss lasted, he kept playing with the accelerator, racing the engine again and again; then he started to count silently: one, two, three, four, five... It won't last longer than seventeen, he thought; but it was twenty-three when he stopped counting and finally gave in.

"Promise you won't call me again," she said.

"I'll try..."

"I want you to swear a solemn oath..."

"I swear..."

"But you won't be able to keep it, will you?"

"Don't think so..."

There came another kiss, just as endless as the former. The young man recited to himself the names of the seven legendary Hungarian chieftains, Almos, Elöd, Ond, Kund, Tas, Huba, Töhötöm; then the seven tribes, equally mythical, which were supposed to have conquered the country: *Nyék, Megyer, Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenö, Kari, Kazi*... He remembered that the last two had variants: *Kér, Keszi;* there must have been some argument about this...

In the meantime two buses came down the road with a terrible clatter; he couldn't see them properly because her face masked them; but he felt the headlights on his neck and he was made uneasy by the possibility of a head-on crash at the unlit curve. With his free hand he reached for the switch and put on his parking lights... ("*I know two things about the horse, and one of them is rather coarse...*") She still clung to him, holding him tight in her arms. ("*The animals came in two by two, Vive la compagnie, the centipede with the kangaroo, Vive la compagnie, One more river, and that's the river of Jordan, One more river, There's one more river to cross...*")

"D'you love me?" she asked.

"You know..."

"But say it. Say, I love you."

"I love you."

"Again."

"I love you."

"Then kiss me..."

He began to recite the periodic system of elements: hydrogen, helium, lithium, beryllium, boron, carbon, nitrogen... he was surprised himself how well he remembered them. Oxygen, fluorine, neon, natrium... This reminded him that

he was stuck again in the laboratory with the measurement of membrane potential and something wasn't right about the potassium definition. For a while he thought hard about the problem, playing with various solutions, speculating—he was working... But the next minute he felt again that he couldn't bear the mouth clinging to his, not a second more. He'd have given six months of his life if at last he could have rolled down Istenhegyi Road blessedly and finally alone.

He tried to jolt her from her sentimental mood; he switched on the inside light, fiddled with the dashboard, twisted dials and knobs—everything was loose and wobbly in this ancient crock of a car. Then he cautiously glanced at his wristwatch, with a small discreet sigh as if he had some urgent appointment, not to be delayed, however bitter parting would be. Then he just stared at her, his eyes veiled, sorrowful and said, "So you're leaving me? So soon?"

She didn't react to this, just gazed into the dusk, so he repeated it, "Is it possible that in a minute we won't be together any more?"

"What'll you be thinking about?" she glanced at him.

He just shrugged, signalling that it was better not to ask. They sat side by side, in silence. He feverishly rattled off the latin prefixes governing the accusative: *ante, apud, ad, adversus*... Next he took refuge in the headings of the Encyclopædia Britannica, eleventh edition: A-Androphagi, Andros-Austria, Austria, Lower-Bismarck, Bismillah-Calgary ...But he got stuck at Harmotome-Hurstmonceux and however he strained his brain, couldn't continue.

"Well then..." she said at this point.

But she just shifted slightly on the seat, she didn't get out. She obviously knew how wide open she left herself, how every second humiliated her afresh—still, she must have needed his presence so much that she couldn't bear to break away. And the young man knew, too, that she was suffering and that he could console her with a little kindness, a pleasant word or two or a gentle gesture. But he was incapable of this; her grief repelled him. His tact only reached so far that he stayed waiting for her to leave. I must endure this, he repeated in self-torturing tenacity, I must sweat it out... "Give me another cigarette..." she said.

He produced his cigarette case; he offered her the half which contained the shorter kind called Matra; but she picked a plump Tulipan from the other side. I'll kill her, he thought dazed with rage. I'll get the starting handle out and brain

her . . . Then he tried to reassure himself; he'd only have to wait for the end of the smoke, then she'd certainly get out. So he stared rigidly at the glowing tip, how it slowly crawled backward, and started to repeat the names of his classmates at high school: Abelovszky, Barta, Békés, Bottlik, Braun, Csoma, Daraban . . .

"You really won't phone?" she asked.

"If that's how you want it . . ."

"Because you love me too much?"

"But I told you—that's just the trouble . . ."

"Ours wasn't just a casual affair, was it?"

"How can you ask? Quite different . . ."

"But you had that kind, too? Didn't you? Many?"

"Not many . . . but this is quite different . . ."

"And you don't want to wreck my life?"

"You know very well . . ."

"Because of my family . . . my child . . . ?"

"Only because of that . . ."

"So you'd rather step aside . . ."

"What else could I do? You tell me . . ."

The cigarette was finished and after emerging from the final kiss, she did put on her hat and step from the car. As she did so, her legs flashed past; she had very lovely legs. The young man stared at her for a moment—but then he forgot her. He felt the joy of relief, the joy of being alone in every cell of his body . . . the next moment he would step on the gas and fly down towards the lights of the city, with the cool wind blowing through the open window . . . He leaned across to slam the door.

She was still standing near the car, on the pavement. She was looking for something in her bag, reached into her pocket, then suddenly slipped back into the car—she had forgotten her gloves. She put them on, leaning back on the seat.

"And tell me, if we meet by accident, even years from now . . . We'll be like this, won't we, so close?"

"Yes, of course . . ." the young man answered. ("*My goodness, my Guinness . . . Guinness is Good For you . . .*")

"Like brother and sister?"

"Like brother and sister . . ."

© Ferenc Karinthy 1963

◆ Ferenc Karinthy is considered one of the best of the new young writers in Hungary. His talent comes naturally, for his father, Frederick, was a famous Hungarian satirist

MOVIE-TIME-QUIZ

1. Which of the following British actresses won acclaim for her part in *Billy Liar*?
(a) Rita Tushingham. (b) Susannah York. (c) Julie Christie.

2. Name three film scripts written by Terence Rattigan.

3. What was the title of the first talking picture?

4. How many "Road" pictures have Bing Crosby and Bob Hope made?

5. Which of the following directed *Stage Coach*?
(a) John Huston. (b) John Ford. (c) Walter Huston.

6. What won an Academy Award as the best film of 1964?

7. Who directed the *Cleopatra* starring Claudette Colbert?

8. Name the three stars of *The Servant.*

9. What was the name of the film based on Rugby League football?

10. *High Noon* starred . . . ?

11. Pair the following Italian directors with their films:
(a) Federico Fellini. (b) Michelangelo Antonioni. (c) Vittorio de Sica. (d) *Bicycle Thieves.* (e) *La Dolce Vita.* (f) *L'Avventura.*

12. Give the names of two actresses playing James Bond's girlfriends in *Goldfinger.*

13. Who played the male lead in *Dial M for Murder*?

14. Which father/daughter team starred in *Tiger Bay*?

15. An American Western, starring Yul Brynner, was based on the Japanese film, *The Seven Samurai*—what was its title?

TURN TO PAGE 35 FOR ANSWERS

DAY OF THE BULLET

by STANLEY ELLIN

I BELIEVE that in each lifetime there is one day of destiny. It may be a day chosen by the Fates who sit clucking and crooning over a spinning wheel, or, perhaps, by the gods whose mill grinds slow, but grinds exceedingly fine. It may be a day of sunshine or rain, of heat or cold. It is probably a day which none of us is aware of at the time, or can even recall through hindsight.

But for every one of us there is that day. And when it leads to a bad end it's better not to look back and search it out. What you discover may hurt, and it's a futile hurt because nothing can be done about it any longer. Nothing at all.

I realise that there is a certain illogic in believing this, something almost mythical. Certainly it would win the ready disfavour of those modern exorcists and dabblers with crystal balls, those psychologists and sociologists and case workers who—using their own peculiar language to express it—believe that there may be a way of controlling the fantastic conjunction of time, place and event that we must all meet at some

invisible crossroads on the Day. But they are wrong. Like the rest of us they can only be wise after the event.

In this case—and the word "case" is particularly fitting here—the event was the murder of a man I had not seen for thirty-five years. Not since a summer day in 1923, or, to be even more exact, the evening of a summer day in 1923, when as boys we faced each other on a street in Brooklyn, and then went our ways, never to meet again.

We were only twelve years old then, he and I, but I remember the date because the next day my family moved to Manhattan, an earth-shaking event in itself. And with dreadful clarity I remember the scene when we parted, and the last thing said there. I understand it now, and know it was that boy's Day. The Day of the Bullet it might be called—although the bullet itself was not to be fired until thirty-five years later.

I learned about the murder from the front page of the newspaper my wife was reading at the breakfast table. She held the paper upright and partly folded, but the fold could not conceal from me the unappetising picture on the front page—the photograph of a man slumped behind the wheel of his car, head clotted with blood, eyes staring and mouth gaping in the throes of violent and horrifying death.

The picture meant nothing to me, any more than did its shouting headline—

RACKETS BOSS SHOT TO DEATH.

All I thought, in fact, was that there were pleasanter objects to stare at over one's coffee and toast.

Then my eye fell on the caption below the picture, and I almost dropped my cup of coffee. *The body of Ignace Kovac,* said the caption, *Brooklyn racket boss who last night . . .*

I took the paper from my wife's hand while she looked at me in astonishment, and studied the picture closely. There was no question about it. I had not seen Ignace Kovac since we were kids together, but I could not mistake him, even in the guise of this dead and bloody hulk. And the most terrible part of it, perhaps, was that next to him, resting against the seat of the car, was a bag of golf clubs. Those golf clubs were all my memory needed to work on.

I was called back to the present by my wife's voice.

"Well," she said with good-natured annoyance, "considering that I'm right in the middle of reading—"

I returned the paper to her. "I'm sorry. I got a jolt when I saw that picture. I used to know him."

Her eyes lit up with the interest of one who—even at second-hand—finds herself in the presence of the notorious.

"You did? When?"

"Oh, when the folks still lived in Brooklyn. We were kids together. He was my best friend."

My wife was an inveterate tease. "Isn't that something! I never knew you hung around with juvenile delinquents when you were a kid."

"He wasn't a juvenile delinquent. Matter of fact—"

"If you aren't the serious one." She smiled at me in kindly dismissal and went back to the paper which clearly offered fresher and more exciting tidings than mine.

"Anyhow," she said, "I wouldn't let it bother me too much, dear. That was a long time ago."

It was a long time ago. You could play ball in the middle of the street then; few automobiles were to be seen in the far reaches of Brooklyn in 1923. And Bath Beach, where I lived, was one of the farthest reaches. It fronted on Gravesend Bay with Coney Island to the east a few minutes away by trolley car, and Dyker Heights and its golf course to the west a few minutes away by foot. Each was an entity separated from Bath Beach by a wasteland of weed-grown lots which building contractors had not yet discovered.

So, as I said, you could play ball in the streets without fear of traffic. Or you could watch the gas-lighter turning up the street lamps at dusk. Or you could wait around the fire-station on Eighteenth Avenue until, if you were lucky enough, an alarm would send the three big horses there slewing the pump-engine out into the street in a spray of sparks from iron-shod wheels. Or, miracle of miracles, you could stand gaping up at the sky to follow the flight of a biplane proudly racketing along overhead.

Those were the things I did that summer, along with Iggy Kovac who was my best friend, and who lived in the house next door. It was a two-storey frame house painted in some sedate colour, just as mine was. Most of the houses in Bath Beach were like that, each with a small garden in front and yard behind. The only example of ostentatious architecture on our block was the house on the corner owned by Mr. Rose, a newcomer to the neighbourhood. It was huge and stuccoed, almost a mansion, surrounded by an enormous lawn, and with a stuccoed two-car garage at the end of its drive.

That drive held a fascination for Iggy and me. On it, now and then, would be parked Mr. Rose's automobile, a grey

Packard, and it was the car that drew us like a magnet. It was not only beautiful to look at from a distance, but close up it loomed over us like a locomotive, giving off an aura of thunderous power even as it stood there quietly. And it had *two* running-boards, one mounted over the other to make the climb into the tonneau easier. No-one else around had anything like that on his car. In fact, no-one we knew had a car anywhere near as wonderful as that Packard.

So we would sneak down the drive when it was parked there, hoping for a chance to mount those running-boards without being caught. We never managed to do it. It seemed that an endless vigil was being kept over that car, either by Mr. Rose himself or by someone who lived in the rooms over the garage. As soon as we were no more than a few yards down the drive a window would open in the house or the garage, and a hoarse voice would bellow threats at us. Then we would turn tail and race down the drive and out of sight.

We had not always done that. The first time we had seen the car we had sauntered up to it quite casually, all in the spirit of good neighbours, and had not even understood the nature of the threats. We only stood there and looked up in astonishment at Mr. Rose, until he suddenly left the window and reappeared before us to grab Iggy's arm.

Iggy tried to pull away and couldn't. "Leggo of me!" he said in a high-pitched, frightened voice. "We weren't doing anything to your ole car! Leggo of me, or I'll tell my father on you. Then you'll see what'll happen!"

This did not seem to impress Mr. Rose. He shook Iggy back and forth—not hard to do because Iggy was small and skinny even for his age—while I stood there, rooted to the spot.

There were some cranky people in the neighbourhood who would chase us away when we made any noise in front of their houses, but nobody had ever handled either of us or spoken to us the way Mr. Rose was doing. I remember having some vague idea that it was because he was new around here, he didn't know yet how people around here were supposed to act, and when I look back now I think I may have been surprisingly close to the truth. But whatever the exact reasons for the storm he raised, it was enough of a storm to have Iggy blubbering out loud, and to make us approach the Packard warily after that. It was too much of a magnet to resist, but once we were on Mr. Rose's territory we were like a pair of rabbits crossing open ground during the hunting season. And with just about as much luck.

I don't want to give the impression by all this that we were bad kids. For myself, I was acutely aware of the letter of the law, and had early discovered that the best course for anyone who was good-natured, pacific and slow afoot—all of which I was in extra measure—was to try to stay within bounds. And Iggy's vices were plain high spirits and recklessness. He was like quicksilver and was always on the go and full of mischief.

And smart. Those were the days when at the end of each school week your marks were appraised and you would be reseated according to your class standing—best students in the first row, next best in the second row, and so on. And I think the thing that best explains Iggy was the way his position in class would fluctuate between the first and sixth rows. Most of us never moved more than one row either way at the end of the week; Iggy would suddenly be shoved from the first row to the ignominy of the sixth, and then the Friday after would just as suddenly ascend the heights back to the first row. That was the sure sign that Mr. Kovac had got wind of the bad tidings and had taken measures.

Not physical measures, either. I once asked Iggy about that, and he said, "Nah, he don't wallop me, but he kind of says, don't be so dumb, and, well—you know—"

I did know, because I suspect that I shared a good deal of Iggy's feeling for Mr. Kovac, a fervent hero worship. For one thing, most of the fathers in the neighbourhood "worked in the city"—to use the Bath Beach phrase—meaning that six days a week they ascended the Eighteenth Avenue station and were borne off to desks in Manhattan.

Mr. Kovac, on the other hand, was a conductor on the Bath Avenue trolley-car line, a powerful and imposing figure in his official cap and blue uniform with the brass buttons on it. The cars on the Bath Avenue line were without side walls, closely lined with benches from front to back, and were manned by conductors who had to swing along narrow platforms on the outside to collect fares. It was something to see Mr. Kovac in action. The only thing comparable was the man who swung himself around a Coney Island merry-go-round to take your tickets.

And for another thing, most of the fathers—at least when they had reached the age mine had—were not much on athletics, while Mr. Kovac was a terrific baseball player. Every fair Sunday afternoon down at the little park by the bay there was a pick-up ball game where the young fellows of the

neighbourhood played a regulation nine innings on a marked-off diamond, and Mr. Kovac was always the star. It was something to watch Iggy when his father was at bat. He'd sit chewing his nails right through every windup of the pitcher, and if Mr. Kovac came through with a hit, Iggy would be up and screaming so loud you'd think your head was coming off.

Then after the game was over we'd hustle a case of pop over to the team, and they would sit around on the park benches and talk things over. Iggy was his father's shadow then; he'd be hanging around that close to him, taking it all in and eating it up. I wasn't so very far away myself, but since I couldn't claim possession as Iggy could, I amiably kept at a proper distance. And when I went home those afternoons, it seemed to me that my father looked terribly stodgy, sitting there on the porch the way he did, with loose pages of the Sunday paper around him.

When I first learned that I was going to have to leave all this, that my family were going to move from Brooklyn to Manhattan, I was completely dazed. Manhattan was a place where on occasional Saturday afternoons you went, all dressed up in your best suit, to shop with your mother at Wanamakers or Macy's, or, with luck, went to the Hippodrome with your father, or maybe to the Museum of Natural History. It had never struck me as a place where people *lived*.

But as the days went by, my feelings changed, became a sort of apprehensive excitement. After all, I was doing something pretty heroic, pushing off into the Unknown this way, and the glamour of it was brought home to me by the way the kids on the block talked to me about it.

However, none of that meant anything the day before we moved. The house looked strange with everything in it packed and crated and bundled together; my mother and father were in a harried state of mind; and the knowledge of impending change—it was the first time in my life I had ever moved from one house to another—now had me scared stiff.

That was the mood I was in when, after an early supper, I pushed through the opening in the hedge between our back yard and the Kovacs', and sat down on the steps before their kitchen door. Iggy came out and sat down beside me. He could see how I felt; it must have made him uncomfortable.

"Don't be such a baby," he said. "It'll be great, living in the city. Look at all the things you'll have to see there."

I told him that I didn't want to see anything there.

"All right, then don't," he said. "You want to read something good? I got a new Tarzan, and I got *The Boy Allies at Jutland*. You can have your pick, and I'll take the other one."

This was a more than generous offer, but I said I didn't feel like reading, either.

"Well, we can't just sit here being mopey," Iggy said reasonably. "Let's do something. What do you want to do?"

This was the opening of the ritual where by rejecting various possibilities—it was too late to go swimming, too hot to play ball, too early to go into the house—we would arrive at a choice. We dutifully went through this process of elimination, and it was Iggy as usual who came up with the choice.

"I know," he said. "Let's go over to Dyker Heights and fish for golf balls. It's pretty near the best time now, anyhow."

He was right about that, because the best time to fish for balls that had been driven into the lone water hazard of the course and never recovered by their owners was at sunset when, chances were, the place would be deserted but there would still be enough light to see by. The way we did this kind of fishing was to pull off our sneakers and stockings, buckle our knickerbockers over our knees, then slowly and speculatively wade through the ooze of the pond, trying to feel out sunken golf balls with our bare feet. It was pleasant work, and occasionally profitable, because the next day any ball you found could be sold to a passing golfer for five cents. I don't remember how we came to fix on the price of five cents as a fair one, but there it was. The golfers seemed to be satisfied with it, and we certainly were.

In all our fishing that summer I don't believe we found more than a total of half a dozen balls, but thirty cents was largesse in those days. My share went fast enough for anything that struck my fancy: Iggy, however, had a great dream. What he wanted more than anything else in the world was a golf club, and every cent he could scrape together was deposited in a tin can with a hole punched in its top and its seam bound with bicycle tape.

He would never open the can, but would shake it now and then to estimate its contents. It was his theory that when the can was full to the top it would hold just about enough to pay for the putter he had picked out in the window of Leo's Sporting Goods Store on 86th Street. Two or three times a week he would have me walk with him down to Leo's, so that we could see the putter, and in between he would talk about it at

length, and demonstrate the proper grip for holding it, and the way you have to line up a long putt on a rolling green. Iggy Kovac was the first person I knew—I have known many since—who was really golf crazy. But I think that his case was the most unique, considering that at the time he had never in his life even had his hands on a real club.

So that evening, knowing how he felt about it, I said all right, if he wanted to go and fish for golf balls I would go with him. It wasn't much of a walk down Bath Avenue; the only hard part was when we entered the course at its far side where we had to climb over mountains of what was politely called "fill." It made hot and smoky going, then there was a swampy patch, and finally the course itself and the water hazard.

I've never been back there since that day, but not long ago I happened to read an article about the Dyker Heights golf course in some magazine. According to the article, it was now the busiest public golf course in the world. Its eighteen well-kept greens were packed with players from dawn to dusk.

Well, each to his own taste, but it wasn't like that when Iggy and I used to fish for golf balls there. For one thing, I don't think it had eighteen holes; I seem to remember it as a nine-hole layout. For another thing, it was usually pretty empty, either because not many people in Brooklyn played golf in those days, or because it was not a very enticing spot at best.

The fact is, it smelled bad. They were reclaiming the swampy land all around it by filling it with refuse, and the smouldering fires in the refuse laid a black pall over the place. No matter when you went there, there was that dirty haze in the air around you and in a few minutes you'd find your eyes smarting and your nose full of a curious acrid smell.

Not that we minded it, Iggy and I. We accepted it casually as part of the scenery, as much a part as the occasional Mack truck loaded with trash that would rumble along the dirt road to the swamp, its chain-drive chattering and whining as it went. The only thing we did mind sometimes was the heat of the refuse underfoot when we climbed over it. We never dared enter the course from the clubhouse side; the attendant there had once caught us in the pond trying to plunder his preserve, and we knew he had us marked. The back entrance may have been hotter, but it was the more practical way in.

When we reached the pond, there was no-one else in sight. It was a hot, still evening with a flaming-red sun now dipping towards the horizon, and once we had our sneakers and

stockings off—long, black cotton stockings they were—we wasted no time wading into the water. It felt good, too, as did the slick texture of the mud oozing up between my toes when I pressed down. I suspect that I had the spirit of the true fisherman in me then. The pleasure lay in the activity, not in the catch.

Still, the catch made a worthy objective, and the idea was to walk along with slow, probing steps, and to stop whenever you felt anything small and solid underfoot. I had just stopped short with the excited feeling that I had pinned down a golf ball in the muck when I heard the sound of a motor moving along the dirt track nearby. My first thought was that it was one of the dump trucks carrying another load to add to the mounting of fill, but then I knew that it didn't sound like a Mack truck.

I looked around to see what kind of car it was, still keeping my foot planted on my prize, but the row of bunkers between the pond and the road blocked my view. Then the sound of the motor suddenly stopped, and that was all I needed to send me splashing out of the water in a panic. All Iggy needed, too, for that matter. In one second we had grabbed up our shoes and stockings and headed around the corner of the nearest bunker where we would be out of sight. In about five more seconds we had our stockings and shoes on without even bothering to dry our legs, ready to take flight if anyone approached.

The reason we moved so fast was simply that we weren't too clear about our legal right to fish for golf balls. Iggy and I had talked it over a couple of times, and while he vehemently maintained that we had every right to—there were the balls, with nobody but the dopey caretaker doing anything about it—he admitted that the smart thing was not to put the theory to the test, but to work our trade unobserved. And I am sure that when the car stopped nearby he had the same idea as I did: somebody had reported us, and now the long hand of authority was reaching out for us.

So we waited, crouching in breathless silence against the grassy wall of the bunker, until Iggy could not contain himself any longer. He crawled on hands and knees to the corner of the bunker and peered around it towards the road.

"Holy smoke, look at that!" he whispered in an awed voice, and waggled his hand at me to come over.

I looked over his shoulder, and with shocked disbelief I saw a grey Packard, a car with double running-boards, one

mounted over the other, the only car of its kind I had ever seen. There was no mistaking it, and there was no mistaking Mr. Rose who stood with two men near it, talking to the smaller one of them, and making angry chopping motions of his hand as he talked.

Looking back now, I think that what made the scene such a strange one was its setting. There was the deserted golf course all around us, and the piles of smouldering fill in the distance. Everything seemed so raw and uncitylike, made crimson by the setting sun; and there in the middle of it was this sleek car and the three men with straw hats and jackets and neckties, all looking completely out of place.

Even more fascinating was the smell of danger around them, because while I couldn't hear what was being said I could see that Mr. Rose was in the same mood he had been in when he caught Iggy and me in his drive. The big man next to him said almost nothing, but the little man Mr. Rose was talking to shook his head, tried to answer, and kept backing away slowly, so that Mr. Rose had to follow him. Then suddenly the little man wheeled around and ran right towards the bunker where Iggy and I were hidden.

We ducked back, but he ran past the far side of it, and he was almost past the pond when the big man caught up with him and grabbed him, Mr. Rose running up after them with his hat in his hand. That is when we could have got away without being seen, but we didn't. We crouched there spell-bound, watching something we would never have dreamed of seeing—grown-ups having it out right in front of us the way it happens in the movies.

I was, as I have said, twelve years old that summer. I can now mark it as the time I learned that there was a difference between seeing things in the movies and seeing them in real life. Because never in watching the most bruising movie, with Tom Mix or Hoot Gibson or any of my heroes, did I feel what I felt there watching what happened to that little man. And I think that Iggy must have felt it even more acutely than I did, because he was so small and skinny himself, and while he was tough in a fight he was always being outweighed and overpowered. He must have felt that he was right there inside that little man, his arms pinned tight behind his back by the bully who had grabbed him, while Mr. Rose hit him back and forth with an open hand across the face, snarling at him all the while.

"You dirty dog," Mr. Rose said. "Do you know who I

am? Do you think I'm one of those lousy small-time bootleggers you doublecross for the fun of it? *This* is who I am!" And with the little man screaming and kicking out at him he started punching away as hard as he could at the belly and face until the screaming and kicking suddenly stopped. Then he jerked his head towards the pond, and his pal heaved the little man right into it headfirst, the straw hat flying off and bobbing up and down in the water a few feet away.

They stood watching until the man in the water managed to get on his hands and knees, blowing out dirty water, shaking his head in a daze, and then without another word they walked off towards the car. I heard its doors slam, and the roar of the engine as it moved off, and then the sound faded away.

All I wanted to do then was get away from there. What I had just seen was too much to comprehend or even believe in; it was like waking up from a nightmare to find it real. Home was where I wanted to be.

I stood up cautiously, but before I could scramble off to home and safety, Iggy clutched the back of my shirt so hard that he almost pulled me down on top of him.

"What're you doing?" he whispered hotly. "Where do you think you're going?"

I pulled myself free. "Are you crazy?" I whispered back. "You expect to hang around here all night? I'm going home, that's where I'm going."

Iggy's face was ashy white, his nostrils flaring. "But that guy's hurt. You just gonna let him stay there?"

"Sure, I'm gonna let him stay there. It's not my business."

"You saw what happened. You think it's right to beat up a guy like that?"

What he said and the way he said it in a tight, choked voice made me wonder if he really had gone crazy just then.

I said weakly, "It's none of my business, that's all. Anyhow, I have to go home. My folks'll be sore if I don't get home on time."

Iggy pointed an accusing finger at me. "All right, if that's the way you feel!" he said, and then before I could stop him he turned and dashed out of concealment towards the pond. Whether it was the sense of being left alone in a hostile world, or whether it was some wild streak of loyalty that acted on me, I don't know. But I hesitated only an instant and then ran after him.

He stood at the edge of the pond looking at the man in it,

who was still on his hands and knees and shaking his head vaguely from side to side.

"Hey, mister," Iggy said, and there was none of the assurance in his voice that there had been before, "are you hurt?"

The man looked slowly around at us, and his face was fearful to behold. It was bruised and swollen and glassy-eyed, and his dripping hair hung in long strings down his forehead. It was enough to make Iggy and me back up a step, the way he looked.

With a great effort he pushed himself to his feet and stood there swaying. Then he lurched forward, staring at us blindly, and we hastily backed up a few more steps. He stopped short and suddenly reached down and scooped up a handful of mud from under the water.

"Get out of here!" he cried out, like a woman screaming. "Get out of here, you little sneaks!"—and without warning flung the mud at us.

It didn't hit me, but it didn't have to. I let out one yell of panic and ran wildly, my heart thudding, my legs pumping as fast as they could. Iggy was almost at my shoulder—I could hear him gasping as we climbed the smouldering hill of refuse that barred the way to the avenue, slid down the other side in a cloud of dirt and ashes, and raced towards the avenue without looking back. It was only when we reached the first street light that we stopped and stood there trembling, our mouths wide open, trying to suck in air, our clothes fouled from top to bottom.

But the shock I had undergone was nothing compared to what I felt when Iggy finally got his wind back enough to speak up.

"Did you see that guy?" he said, still struggling for breath. "Did you see what they did to him? Come on, I'm gonna tell the cops."

I couldn't believe my ears. "The cops? What do you want to get mixed up with the cops for? What do you care what they did to him, for Pete's sake?"

"Because they beat him up, didn't they? And the cops can stick them in jail for fifty years if somebody tells them, and I'm a witness. I saw what happened and so did you. So you're a witness too."

I didn't like it. I certainly had no sympathy for the evil-looking apparition from which I had just fled, and, more than that, I balked at the idea of having anything to do with the police. Not that I had ever had any trouble with them. It

was just that, like most other kids I knew, I was nervous in the presence of a police uniform. It left me even more mystified by Iggy than ever. The idea of any kid voluntarily walking up to report something to a policeman was beyond comprehension.

I said bitterly," All right, so I'm a witness. But why can't the guy that got beat up go and tell the cops about it? Why do we have to go and do it?"

"Because he wouldn't tell anybody about it. Didn't you see the way he was scared of Mr. Rose? You think it's all right for Mr. Rose to go around like that, beating up anybody he wants to, and nobody does anything about it?"

Then I understood. Beneath all this weird talk, this sudden access of nobility, was solid logic, something I could get hold of. It was not the man in the water Iggy was concerned with, it was himself. Mr. Rose had pushed *him* around, and now he had a perfect way of getting even.

I didn't reveal this thought to Iggy, though, because when your best friend has been shoved around and humiliated in front of you, you don't want to remind him of it. But at least it put everything into proper perspective. Somebody hurts you, so you hurt him back, and that's all there is to it.

It also made it much easier to go along with Iggy in his plan. I wasn't really being called on to ally myself with some stupid grown-up who had got into trouble with Mr. Rose; I was being a good pal to Iggy.

All of a sudden, the prospect of walking into the police station and telling my story to somebody seemed highly intriguing. And, the reassuring thought went, far at the back of my head, none of this could mean trouble for me later on, because tomorrow I was moving to Manhattan anyhow.

So I was right there, a step behind Iggy, when we walked up between the two green globes, which still seemed vaguely menacing to me, and into the police station.

There was a tall desk there, like a judge's bench, at which a grey-haired man sat writing, and at its foot was another desk at which sat a very fat uniformed man reading a magazine. He put the magazine down when we approached and looked at us with raised eyebrows.

"Yeah?" he said. "What's the trouble?"

I had been mentally rehearsing a description of what I had seen back there on the golf course, but I never had a chance to speak my piece. Iggy started off with a rush, and there was no way of getting a word in.

The fat man listened with a puzzled expression, every now and then pinching his lower lip between his thumb and forefinger. Then he looked up at the one behind the tall desk and said, "Hey, sergeant, here's a couple of kids say they saw an assault over at Dyker Heights. You want to listen to this?"

The sergeant didn't even look at us, but kept on writing. "Why?" he said. "What's wrong with your ears?"

The fat policeman leaned back in his chair and smiled. "I don't know," he said, "only it seems to me some guy named Rose is mixed up in this."

The sergeant suddenly stopped writing. "What's that?" he said.

"Some guy named Rose," the fat policeman said, and he appeared to be enjoying himself a good deal. "You know anybody with that name who drives a big grey Packard?"

The sergeant motioned with his head for us to come right up to the platform his desk was on. "All right, kid," he said to Iggy, "what's bothering you?"

So Iggy went through it again, and when he was finished the sergeant just sat there looking at him, tapping his pen on the desk. He looked at him so long and kept tapping that pen so steadily—*tap, tap, tap*—that my skin started to crawl.

It didn't surprise me when he finally said to Iggy in a hard voice, "You're a pretty wise kid."

"What do you mean?" Iggy said. "I *saw* it!" He pointed at me. "He saw it, too. He'll tell you!"

I braced myself for the worst and then noted with relief that the sergeant was paying no attention to me. He shook his head at Iggy and said, "I do the telling around here, kid. And I'm telling you you've got an awful big mouth for someone your size. Don't you have more sense than to go around trying to get people into trouble?"

This, I thought, was the time to get away from there, because if I ever needed proof that you don't mix into grown-up business I had it now. But Iggy didn't budge. He was always pretty good at arguing himself out of spots where he was wrong; now that he knew he was right he was getting hot with outraged virtue.

"Don't you believe me?" he demanded. "For Pete's sake, I was right there when it happened! I was this close!"

The sergeant looked like a thundercloud. "All right, you were that close," he said. "Now beat it, kid, and keep that big mouth shut. I got no time to fool around any more. Go on, get out of here."

Iggy was so enraged that not even the sergeant's big gold badge a foot from his nose could intimidate him now. "I don't care if you don't believe me! There's plenty other people'll believe me. Wait until I tell my father. You'll see!"

I could hear my ears ringing in the silence that followed. The sergeant sat staring at Iggy, and Iggy, a little scared by his own outburst, stared back. He must have had the same idea I did then. Yelling at a cop was probably as bad as hitting one, and we'd both end up in jail for the rest of our lives. Not for a second did I feel any of the righteous indignation Iggy did. As far as I was concerned, he had led me into this trap, and I was going to pay for his lunacy. I guess I hated him then even more than the sergeant did.

It didn't help any when the sergeant finally turned to the fat policeman with the air of a man who had made up his mind.

"Take the car and drive over to Rose's place," he said. "You can explain all this to him, and ask him to come along back with you. Oh yes, and get the kid's name and address, and bring his father along, too. Then we'll see."

So I had my first and only experience of sitting on a bench in a police station watching the pendulum of the big clock on the wall swinging back and forth, and recounting all my past sins to myself. It couldn't have been more than a half hour before the fat policeman walked in with Mr. Rose and Iggy's father, but it seemed like a year. And a long, miserable year at that.

The surprising thing was the way Mr. Rose looked. I had half expected them to bring him in fighting and struggling, because while the sergeant may not have believed Iggy's story Mr. Rose would know it was so.

But far from struggling, Mr. Rose looked as if he had dropped in for a friendly visit. He was dressed in a fine summer suit and sporty-looking black and white shoes and he was smoking a cigar. He was perfectly calm and pleasant, and, in some strange way, he almost gave the impression that he was in charge there.

It was different with Iggy's father. Mr. Kovac must have been reading the paper out on the porch in his undershirt, because his regular shirt had been stuffed into his pants carelessly and part of it hung out. And from his manner you'd think that he was the one who had done something wrong. He kept swallowing hard, and twisting his neck in his collar, and now and then glancing nervously at Mr. Rose. He didn't look at all impressive as he did at other times.

The sergeant pointed at Iggy. "All right, kid," he said, "now tell everybody here what you told me. Stand up so we can all hear it."

Since Iggy had already told it twice he really had it down pat now, and he told it without a break from start to finish, no-one interrupting him. And all the while Mr. Rose stood there listening politely, and Mr. Kovac kept twisting his neck in his collar.

When Iggy was finished the sergeant said, "I'll put it to you straight out, Mr. Rose. Were you near that golf course today?"

Mr. Rose smiled. "I was not," he said.

"Of course not," said the sergeant. "But you can see what we're up against here."

"Sure I can," said Mr. Rose. He went over to Iggy and put a hand on his shoulder. "And you know what?" he said. "I don't even blame the kid for trying this trick. He and I had a little trouble some time back about the way he was always climbing over my car, and I guess he's just trying to get square with me. I'd say he's got a lot of spirit in him. Don't you, sonny?" he asked, squeezing Iggy's shoulder in a friendly way.

I was stunned by the accuracy of this shot, but Iggy reacted like a firecracker going off. He pulled away from Mr. Rose's hand and ran over to his father. "I'm *not* lying!" he said desperately and grabbed Mr. Kovac's shirt, tugging at it. "Honest to God, Pop, we both saw it. Honest to God, Pop!"

Mr. Kovac looked down at him and then looked around at all of us. When his eyes were on Mr. Rose it seemed as if his collar were tighter than ever. Meanwhile, Iggy was pulling at his shirt, yelling that we saw it, we saw it, and he wasn't lying, until Mr. Kovac shook him once, very hard, and that shut him up.

"Iggy," said Mr. Kovac, "I don't want you to go around telling stories about people. Do you hear me?"

Iggy heard him, all right. He stepped back as if he had been walloped across the face, and then stood there looking at Mr. Kovac in a funny way. He didn't say anything, didn't even move when Mr. Rose came up and put a hand on his shoulder again.

"You heard your father, didn't you, kid?" Mr. Rose said.

Iggy still didn't say anything.

"Sure you did," Mr. Rose said. "And you and I understand each other a lot better now, kiddo, so there's no hard

feelings. Matter of fact, any time you want to come over to the house you come on over, and I'll bet there's plenty of odd jobs you can do there. I pay good, too, so don't you worry about that." He reached into his pocket and took out a bill. "Here," he said, stuffing it into Iggy's hand, "this'll give you an idea. Now go on out and have yourself some fun."

Iggy looked at the money like a sleepwalker. I was baffled by that. As far as I could see, this was the business, and here was Iggy in a daze, instead of openly rejoicing. It was only when the sergeant spoke to us that he seemed to wake up.

"All right, you kids," the sergeant said, "beat it home now. The rest of us got some things to talk over."

I didn't need a second invitation. I got out of there in a hurry and went down the street fast, with Iggy tagging along behind me not saying a word. It was three blocks down and one block over, and I didn't slow down until I was in front of my house again. I had never appreciated those familiar outlines and the lights in the windows any more than I did at that moment. But I didn't go right in. It suddenly struck me that this was the last time I'd be seeing Iggy, so I waited there awkwardly. I was never very good at saying goodbyes.

"That was all right," I said finally. "I mean Mr. Rose giving you that dollar. That's as good as twenty golf balls."

"Yeah?" said Iggy, and he was looking at me in the same funny way he had looked at his father. "I'll bet it's as good as a whole new golf club. Come on down to Leo's with me, and I'll show you."

I wanted to, but I wanted to get inside the house even more. "Ahh, my folks'll be sore if I stay out too late tonight," I said. "Anyhow, you can't buy a club for a dollar. You'll need way more than that."

"You think so?" Iggy said, and then held out his hand and slowly opened it so that I could see what he was holding. It was not a one-dollar bill. It was, to my great awe, a five-dollar bill.

That, as my wife said, was a long time ago. Thirty-five years before a photograph was taken of little Ignace Kovac, a man wise in the way of the rackets, slumped in a death agony over the wheel of his big car, a bullet hole in the middle of his forehead, a bag of golf clubs leaning against the seat next to him. Thirty-five years before I understood the meaning of the last things said and done when we faced each other on a street in Brooklyn, and then went off, each in his own direction . . .

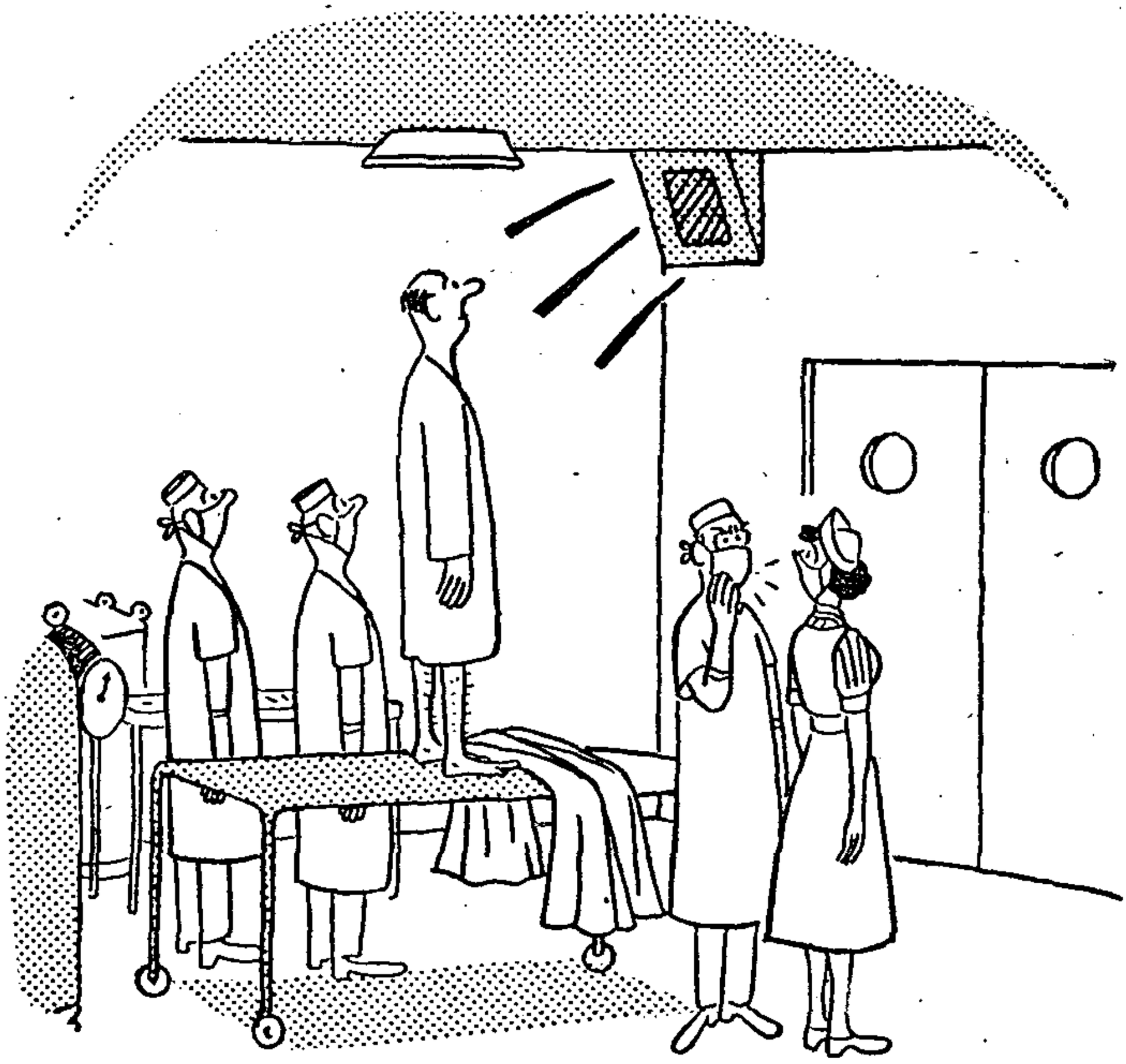
I gaped at the money in Iggy's hand. It was the hoard of Croesus, and its very magnitude alarmed me.

"Hey," I said. "That's five bucks. That's a lot of money! You better give it to your old man, or he'll really jump on you."

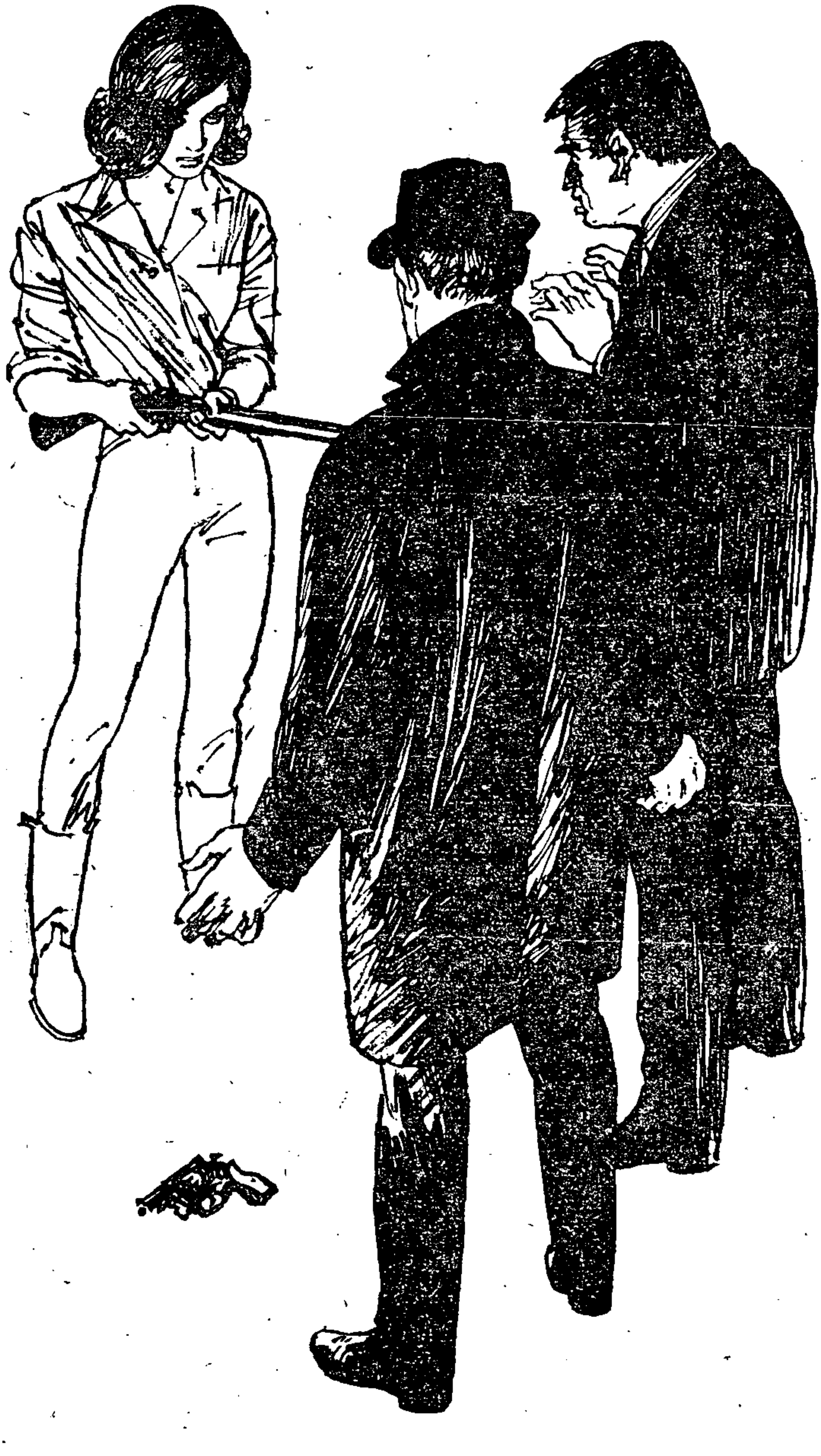
Then I saw to my surprise that the hand holding the money was shaking. Iggy was suddenly shuddering all over as if he had just plunged into icy water.

"My old man?" he yelled wildly at me, and his lips drew back showing his teeth clenched together hard, as if that could stop the shuddering. "You know what I'll do if my old man tries anything? I'll tell Mr. Rose on him, that's what! Then you'll see!"

And he wheeled and ran blindly away from me down the street to his destiny.



"Find out who put God Save the Queen on the public-address system."



THE SPOILERS

by Michael Gilbert

Mr. Calder, special agent extraordinary, who recently had his debut on TV, returns in a story specially written for Argosy

ON FRIDAY night Colonel Geoffrey Bax went down alone for a last visit to his weekend cottage in Sussex. It was a last visit, because the cottage had been put up for sale. He was alone because his wife was escorting her mother on her summer pilgrimage to Torquay.

On Saturday morning the farmer drove up with milk and eggs, and discovered the Colonel. He was seated in the chair at the head of the kitchen table, under the still burning electric light. It was a hot June morning, and the flies were already gathering round the pool of blackening blood on the table top. The gun which had killed the Colonel was in his right hand.

Mr. Behrens had known Colonel Bax. He read the news in his Sunday paper, and walked up the hill to discuss it with his old friend Mr. Calder.

"It's in my paper too," said Mr. Calder. "But I didn't really know Bax. Wasn't he working for D.I.5?"

"Yes. He got a job with them when he retired from the Army. It wasn't anything hush-hush, you know. He did a lot of their positive vetting."

"I'd rather pick oakum," said Mr. Calder.

(Positive vetting was a palliative devised by the government in 1952 after a series of security scandals. It meant, in practice, that any government servant who attained a certain degree of seniority had to supply the name of a referee; and it then became the duty of the positive vetter to interview the referee

and inquire of him whether the officer concerned was reliable. The answer was predictable.)

"Most of those jobs went to officers who had been axed," said Mr. Behrens. "They got quite well paid for it. Add the salary to their service pensions and they could get by."

Mr. Calder looked up sharply. He had known Mr. Behrens long enough to ignore the plain meaning of what he said and jump to the thought behind it.

"Do you think there was some sort of pressure on Bax?"

"It's not impossible. The material was there. In his case it was a girl. Her parents were Poles. Geoffrey did them a good turn, just after the war, and was godfather to their little daughter."

"Daddy Longlegs," said Mr. Calder, scratching the head of his deer hound, Rasselas, who was stretched out under the breakfast table.

"It's all very well for you to sneer," said Mr. Behrens. "I've met the girl. She's very beautiful."

"Did Bax's wife know about her?"

"If she had, she'd have started divorce proceedings at once. She was that sort of woman."

"If she was that sort of woman, Bax would have been well rid of her."

"He'd have lost his job."

Mr. Calder, considering the matter, was inclined to agree. He knew that, in certain branches of the Security Services, sexual irregularity was considered a good deal worse than crime and nearly as bad as ideological deviation.

"He could have lived on his pension."

"*And* paid alimony to his wife?"

"He wouldn't have starved," said Mr. Calder. "There was no need to blow his brains out. *That* didn't help."

"That cottage of his," said Mr. Behrens. "He was very fond of it. He often talked about it. He was going to retire there."

"So?"

"I wondered why he had to sell it."

"You're making my flesh creep," said Mr. Calder. And from under the table Rasselas gave a rumbling snarl, just as if he had been following the whole conversation.

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Education, Dermot Nicholson, read the news in his elegant flat on Campden Hill.

He said to his sister, Norah—who had retired from the

Vice-Principalship of an Oxford college to keep house and write his speeches for him—" Colonel Geoffrey Bax. Do we know a Geoffrey Bax? The name seems familiar."

" Wasn't that the name of the man who was round here a few weeks ago, asking you a lot of questions?"

" Oh, was that the chap? I thought I'd seen the name somewhere."

" What *did* he want? Did you ever find out?"

" It was some sort of routine check."

" We're getting so security-minded," said Miss Nicholson, " that we might as well be living in a totalitarian state, under the control of the Gestapo."

Miss Nicholson, who was an intellectual liberal, often said things like this in letters to the Press, and at public meetings; possibly because she had never lived in a totalitarian state and had no experience of the Gestapo . . .

Professor Julius Gottlieb, a citizen of Czechoslovakia by birth, and of Great Britain by naturalisation, read the news in his service flat in Northumberland Court. He took eight different Sunday papers, and he found the story, with minor differences and embellishments, in all of them. It was clearly based on an official handout.

As he finished reading, the telephone rang. He hesitated for a long moment before answering it, but when he did so it was only his daughter, Paula. She had gone down to Henley for the weekend.

" It's lovely," she said. " You ought to have come."

" I wanted to," said the Professor. " But I had too much work."

" You'd be better off bathing and lying in the sun, than worrying about that silly paper. Fritz is enjoying it like anything. He had a fight with another dog. And he fell into the river, and was hissed at by a swan."

" Good," said the Professor. " Good." He spoke absently. When his daughter had rung off he seemed to be in no hurry to get on with the urgent work which was keeping him in London that fine June weekend. He sat in the window seat, watching the traffic swirl up Northumberland Avenue and turn down Whitehall Place. The telephone rang again . . .

On the Thursday afternoon a Coroner's Jury came, without difficulty, to the conclusion that Colonel Geoffrey Bax had taken his own life whilst the balance of his mind was disturbed. Sympathy was expressed for his widow.

On Sunday morning the Prime Minister took breakfast at

Chequers with the Prime Ministers of five of the newly-independent African States. He thought that they looked politely surprised at the modest bacon and eggs and toast and marmalade.

"What the devil did they expect me to eat," he said to his private secretary when the last of his guests had gone. "Boar's head and ambrosia?"

"I imagine Nwambe's idea of a suitable breakfast would be the head of the leader of the opposition, seethed in milk," said the private secretary. "Your next appointment's in five minutes. They've all arrived. I've put them in the small library."

The Prime Minister switched his mind to a problem which was worrying him a lot more than the growing pains of the new African States. He said, "I want those papers. Particularly that rather odd letter that Gottlieb wrote me."

He found four men waiting for him. Ian Maver, the head of D.I.5, Air Vice-Marshal Pulleyne, the acting head of D.I.6—his boss was in America, engaged on one of the interminable wrangles with the CIA—and Commander Elfe, of the Special Branch. All of these the Prime Minister knew personally. The face of the fourth man was unfamiliar, and even when Maver introduced Mr. Fortescue it took him a moment to place him. Then he remembered that this sedate and respectable-looking man was ostensibly a bank manager, and in fact the controller and paymaster of a bunch of middle-aged cut-throats known as the "E" (or External) Branch of the Joint Services Standing Intelligence Committee. When the Prime Minister, on taking office, had shouldered, among other unwanted burdens, the supreme responsibility for all security matters, his predecessor had explained to him, "If there's a job which is so disreputable that none of the departments will handle it we give it to the 'E' Branch."

The Prime Minister looked a second time at Mr. Fortescue, who looked back at him kindly but firmly, as if preparing to refuse him an overdraft. An interesting face, thought the Prime Minister. Not unlike Arthur Balfour, in middle age.

"You're busy men," he said, "and I apologise for disrupting Sunday for all four of you. If I'd had a more accurate idea of what this trouble was, I could probably have let three of you off." He smiled the boyish smile which had won the hearts of so many of his constituents in the old days and was now collecting high TAM ratings on television. "But the fact of the matter is that, although I'm worried, I'm not at all sure

which of you gentlemen is going to have to shoulder my worries for me. I'll put the problem to you in a nutshell. Certain key men in my government are being got at. You've got to find out who's doing it. And you've got to stop it."

Mr. Fortescue, who was himself an adept in the handling of conferences, found himself admiring the Prime Minister's technique. First the gentle introduction. Then the sharp slap.

"*Got* at, Prime Minister?" said Maver.

"That was the word I used. I can't be more specific, until you gentlemen find out more about it. They are being got at. Not by the opposition, which would be natural, or by the Press, which would be understandable, but by some private agency or group of persons who seem to be determined to get this government out of office."

The Prime Minister saw the quick look which Maver shot Pulleyne, but gave no sign of having done so. He chalked it up as one more item on the debit account of the head of D.I.5. He had liked Maver's predecessor, a garrulous, drunken, inefficient Irishman, a great deal more than the cold, self-contained, unquestionably efficient Scot.

"I think," the Prime Minister continued, "that when you hear the facts you will agree that I have some grounds for disquiet. A few months ago, Sir William Hamson, one of the most senior Revenue officials, and the man who did most of the work on last year's budget, came to me and told me that he wished to retire. He had eight years to go before his normal retirement. It was extremely inconvenient though not, as it turned out, disastrous, because he had a deputy who was capable of doing his job. But it might have upset the whole of our financial plans. Sir William gave me no reason, apart from saying that he was tired. I pointed out that he would lose a good slice of his pension. Since he had private means, that didn't worry him. We had to let him go, of course. He's now in the South of France, and seems to have recovered his health and spirits. By itself, such an incident meant nothing. Two months ago, Dermot Nicholson who, as you know, is Minister of Education, and is therefore in charge of the most important measure of this session—a measure whose success might make the difference between defeat and victory—came to see me. I was at once reminded of Hamson. There was the same request—to be relieved of office. The same lack of any plausible reason. The same... I find it difficult to hit on the right word... it was something a great deal stronger than depression. There was an edge of fear to it. And a

background of hopelessness." The Prime Minister paused, and then added, "If his doctor had told him that morning that he was suffering from inoperable cancer, I should have expected much the same sort of reactions."

The four men stirred uncomfortably in their chairs.

"I suppose," said Elfe, "that he wasn't—"

"I happen to know that there is nothing wrong with Nicholson's health at all. Let me finish. A fortnight ago I had to send for Professor Julius Gottlieb. You all know, roughly, what his job is, I expect? He is the leading town-planning expert in the world. Even the Americans admit it. Some months ago, at my request, he completed the first rough draft of a White Paper on planning. It wasn't perfect, but believe me, it was two decades in advance of anything this country has yet seen. The departments concerned—particularly the Treasury and the Ministry of Agriculture—picked a few holes in it, but they couldn't shoot it down. When all the criticisms had been collected. Gottlieb was to draw up the final version. He now says—" the Prime Minister paused again; not for effect this time, Mr. Fortescue thought, but because he was really worried and angry—"he now says that he doesn't feel up to the job. He is thinking of retiring. He has a holiday chalet in Switzerland, in the Upper Vaud. I believe it's famous for its wild flowers. He has decided to retire and make it his permanent home."

Commander Elfe said, "It's disturbing, Prime Minister. But is it necessarily political?"

"When Education and Planning are the two cornerstones of this Session? What are people going to say—more to the point, what is the Press going to say—if we have to tell them that the chief architect of the new Education Bill has thrown in the sponge—and the Government's principal adviser on planning has refused to finish his own White Paper, and is retiring to Switzerland to pick wild flowers."

"It was six months ago," said Pulleyne, in his precise voice, "when Hamson walked out. Two months ago when you first got worried about Nicholson. A fortnight ago when Gottlieb threatened to throw in his hand. Have no steps been taken?"

"Yes," said Maver. "It looked like a home security matter, so it was handed to us. We put one of our most reliable men on to it. He talked to Nicholson and Gottlieb."

"Did he come to any conclusion as a result of these talks?"

"We don't know. He committed suicide a week ago."

"Then you're talking about Colonel Bax?"

"Yes."

"And has he, himself, been investigated?"

Maver flushed and said, "Of course. And there *was* a background story, which could have accounted for it. We haven't got very far with it yet. But it's quite possible that he was being blackmailed, and had been driven too far."

"Well, that's the position, gentlemen," said the Prime Minister. "It could be organised pressure from an unscrupulous group in this country. I don't mean the official opposition. But there are plenty of extremist groups who wouldn't stop short of it. It could be foreign inspired. I can think of four countries, at this moment, which would give a great deal to have the present government discredited. Or it may be simple blackmail. I leave you, gentlemen, to sort out the departmental priorities amongst yourselves. *I just want it stopped.*"

To his secretary when they had all gone away, he said, "Do you realise that all prime ministers have to live out the enthusiasms of their predecessors? Because of Lloyd George's lower middle-class habits, I have to entertain official guests to breakfast. Because of Winston's boyish enthusiasm for cops and robbers I have to pretend to be personally responsible for Security. Do you remember that thing he wrote—?"

The private secretary didn't remember, but being a good private secretary he was able to put his hand on the reference his employer required. He fetched down a battered olive green volume from the library shelf, found the place, and read out: "'...plot and counterplot, ruse and treachery, cross and double-cross, true agent, false agent, gold and steel, the bomb, the dagger and the firing-party ... interwoven in a texture so intricate as to be incredible ... yet true ... the high officers of the Secret Service revelled in these subterranean labyrinths, and pursued their task with cold and silent passion.'"

"I didn't notice them revelling," said the Prime Minister.

"Did you?"

Ian Maver and Mr. Fortescue travelled back in the official car together. Maver said nothing until they were approaching the outskirts of London. Then he closed the glass panel to shut off the driver, and said, "The PM mentioned three possible explanations. There are at least two more that he omitted."

"Yes," said Mr. Fortescue.

"The whole thing could be a coincidence. People crack up pretty quickly in government service these days. And all

three of the people he mentioned had private means. There was no reason for them to kill themselves by going on doing a job which had got beyond them."

"No," said Mr. Fortescue. "And your other explanation?"

"The other possible explanation is that the Prime Minister has greatly exaggerated the whole thing as an excuse for getting rid of me. I'm afraid he doesn't like me very much."

Mr. Fortescue did not make any comment on this.

On the following Monday, Dermot Nicholson got back to his flat at Campden Hill at just after midnight. He was looking forward to a night-cap and bed.

His key went into the lock, but he was unable to turn it, and when he tried to get it out again he found it was stuck. He rang the bell. Nothing happened. His sister very rarely went to bed before midnight and was most unlikely to be asleep.

Someone, or something, moved in the flat.

There was an indeterminate shuffling noise and, as he bent his head to listen, he thought he heard a faint moan.

In a sudden panic he rattled the door, shouted, put his shoulder to it; then turned, and raced downstairs. There was a night porter, who had a master key.

"If your key's stuck in the lock, sir," he said, "it's no good trying to use my master key. We shall have to break the door down, and the police'll do that quicker than we will."

"Hurry," said Nicholson. "Hurry. Something's happened to my sister. She may have had a stroke."

Detective Sergeant Hallows, who was night duty officer at Notting Hill Gate, arrived inside five minutes. He and the police driver went up, carrying between them an assortment of housebreaking implements. It took them a further three minutes to deal with the front door. Nicholson pushed past them, and went straight to his sister's bedroom. She had been tied to the end of the bed with sheets, and gagged with a towel. The knots had been so savagely tightened that Nicholson was unable to do anything with them. He picked a pair of scissors from the dressing table, but his hands were shaking and he dropped them. The Sergeant cut through the sheets with a knife; as soon as the gag was out of her mouth Miss Nicholson started to scream . . .

"I have to announce," said the Prime Minister to the House, on Wednesday, "the news—to me, personally, it is very sad news—that the Right Honourable Member for Burnham Heath has had to offer me his resignation as Minister for Education.

He has done this on the advice of his doctors. I have not yet finally decided on a successor, but I can assure the House that there will be no change in the Government's education policy."

An opposition back-bencher said, "Whilst we sympathise with the Prime Minister for having lost yet another of his already depleted team, we should be interested to know exactly what the late Minister of Education was suffering from? Could it be that he was sick of the Education Bill—"

The rest was lost in a roar of government protest and opposition laughter.

On the same Wednesday, Mr. Calder and Mr. Behrens both received telephone calls at home. Mr. Behrens said to his sister, "I've some business in town. I'll probably stay at the Club for a few nights."

His sister said, "You know that I don't like being left here alone."

"Why don't you visit Millicent?"

"It's tiresome you couldn't have given me more notice."

Mr. Calder got his old car out of the woodshed. To Rasselas, who was sunning himself in his favourite spot behind the wood pile, he said, "Back tonight." The big dog sighed windily, in almost the same way that Miss Behrens had done.

Mr. Fortescue normally operated from the Westminster Branch of the London and Home Counties Bank. But he had other offices. The one which he used on official occasions was in Richmond Terrace Mews, and it was here that Mr. Calder and Mr. Behrens found him.

When he had finished talking, Mr. Calder said, "Mightn't there be some danger of getting our wires crossed over this? Most of it sounds like ordinary police work."

"I agree that there's a police angle to it," said Mr. Fortescue. "Since it involves the security of Ministers, it's the Special Branch which is involved. Elfe will be in charge of that side of it. He's appointing one of his best men to act as liaison between D.I.5 and the police. Generally speaking, however, it's agreed that you're to have a free hand."

Mr. Behrens said, "I knew Gottlieb slightly. I met him in the 'forties, when he first came to England. I could have a word with him."

"Then I'll start with Nicholson," said Mr. Calder...

"It was a pig-sty," said the Detective Sergeant. "They did everything filthy they could think of. Over the floor, in the beds, everywhere. We've cleared up as best we could, but there's some things—well, come and have a look."

He led the way into the living room. Someone had broken the glass in each of the half-dozen pictures on the wall and smeared filth over them. They were flower pictures, originals from Montessor's great folio. Looking closer, Mr. Calder saw that not only had the glass been smashed. The name of each plant was inscribed in copper-plate at the foot of each picture. Someone had scored these through with an indelible pencil, and printed the word, PANSY.

"It's not only the pictures," said Hallows. "It's the books too. Someone took a lot of trouble over this little job."

There were a couple of hundred books in the fitted bookshelves between the windows. The back had been ripped out of each book, with a knife.

"We don't know just what they did do to his sister," said Hallows. "She's in a private nursing home. Maybe she'll be able to tell us something when she gets her wits back."

"Did they take anything?"

"Nicholson says they took some money out of the desk, but it wasn't money they were after. It was a grudge job."

"I agree," said Mr. Calder. He phrased his next question delicately, aware that it might give offence. "Seeing that he was a senior Cabinet Minister, I wondered if any special arrangements might have been made. I know the police can't keep a twenty-four hour watch on all these people—"

"He was guarded," said Hallows. "A private outfit was doing the job."

"Private?"

"That's right. We're so short of policemen that government departments have started using private outfits lately. As a matter of fact, some of them are ex-policemen."

"They seem to have slipped up on this occasion."

The doorbell rang.

Hallows said, as he went to open it, "They didn't slip. They were ditched. I asked the head of the firm to come round. This is probably him now. He can tell you about it."

Mr. Cotter, the managing director and founder of Cotter's Detectives, was a thickset, red-faced man with a Brigade moustache. He shook hands with Mr. Calder and said, "Bad business. I've had to give Romilly his cards. No alternative. I don't know that it was one hundred per cent his fault. He's never let me down before, anyway."

"What happened?"

"Someone telephoned the night porter, said he was Nicholson's secretary. The Minister had been detained at a meeting

out at Finchley. Could Romilly pick up his car from the forecourt of the House, drive it out to Finchley, pick the old man up, and bring him back to Westminster. It was plausible. After all, his main job's to look after the Minister."

"When this man telephoned," said Mr. Calder, "did he actually say *Romilly*?".

Mr. Cotter thought for a moment, and then said, "Yes. I think he did. Why?"

"It would argue a pretty close knowledge of your set-up if he knew the name of the man on duty at any given time. How many men do you have on a job like this?"

"It's a team of three. They do ten-hour stretches. That gives them a sort of dog watch."

"Who are the other two?"

Mr. Cotter shot a glance at Sergeant Hallows, who said, "That's all right. Mr. Calder is from the Security Executive. He's helping us."

"I see," said Mr. Cotter. "My other two men on this assignment were Angel and Lawrie." He added stiffly, "They're both reliable men."

"Frank Angel," said Mr. Calder. "Small, dark, thick and Welsh?"

"That's him. Do you know him?"

"I worked with him on one or two jobs at Blenheim," said Mr. Calder. The atmosphere seemed to have become easier.

Mr. Behrens knew the Head of Records personally, and was thus able to get in to see this most closely guarded of all Home Office and Ministry of Defence officials. He said, "I want your full record on Gottlieb. The X *and* the Y file, please."

"You know as well as I do," said the Head of Records, "that you can't see the Y file without Cabinet authority."

Mr. Behrens laid his authority on the desk. The Head of Records read it through carefully and made a telephone call.

To the plump, serious young man with the middle-aged face, who arrived in answer to it, he said, "This is Mr. Behrens, Smythe. Will you show him the X *and* Y files on Professor Julius Gottlieb."

Smythe said, in the manner of Jeeves, "If you would kindly step this way, sir," and conducted Mr. Behrens to the room in the basement of the building which contained, in numbered filing cabinets, enough high explosive to blow up both sides of Whitehall. He unlocked one of the cabinets, drew out two

folders, one thick and one thin, placed a table and chair, and said, "I'll leave you to it, sir."

As Mr. Behrens leafed through the folders he was smiling to himself. He was aware of the principles upon which this particular room was constructed, and he knew that anyone having access to a Y file was not only watched but possibly photographed as well.

When he had finished he touched the bell. As he did so, he smiled again. He was aware that all he had to do was to say, without raising his voice, "Oh, Smythe—" and the guardian of the papers would have reappeared. By doing this, he would have demonstrated that he knew quite well that not only was every one of his movements being watched, but also that the room was wired for sound.

Mr. Behrens did no such thing. He had long outgrown any desire to give pointless exhibitions of his own expertise.

After a decent interval, Mr. Smythe reappeared.

"A lot of this Y file," said Mr. Behrens, "is in summary and *précis*. I imagine that the original documents—verbatim records of interrogations, and so on—were too bulky to file. Where would they be kept?"

"If they *were* kept," said Smythe, "I imagine they'd be at Brooklands. Or perhaps at Staines."

Mr. Behrens thanked him. Since it was then a quarter to one, he thought he would have lunch before tackling Gottlieb.

The girl who opened the door of the flat in Northumberland Court was, as Mr. Behrens saw, even in the poor light of the front hall, pretty. When she had shown him into the drawing room, he changed his mind. Pretty was all wrong. A stupid word, in any human context. She was attractive, with the attractions of dark hair, bright eyes, a good figure and youth.

She chased a dachshund off the sofa. "We call all our dachshunds, Fritz," she said. "After the dog in that strip they used to have in the *Daily Mirror*. Do you remember? This one is Fritz the Third. He's the nicest and naughtiest of the lot. Daddy's mad about him."

She departed to summon her father. Mr. Behrens was not himself a susceptible man, but he made a mental note of the charm of Miss Gottlieb since an attractive girl could be a relevant factor in any equation.

Professor Gottlieb, who came in at that moment, turned out to be a small man, with a suggestion of a hump-back, a brown face, and a mop of snowy-white hair. He, like his daughter, was friendly. But it was clear to Mr. Behrens that he was

on the defensive. They talked a little about the war. The Professor had left Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1940 and had reached England in the autumn of that year by a round-about route, through Greece and Turkey. After being screened, he had been allowed to work on deep penetration bombs where his theoretical knowledge of electronics had been valuable. He had also done some work on DZ fuses, and, at the end of the war, on guided missiles.

"It is curious when you come to think of it," said the Professor. "For the first twelve or fifteen years of my professional life, I worked on planning projects—in my own country, in Sweden and Denmark and America. I was hoping to contrive new and better towns for people to live in. Then, for six whole years, I worked at destruction. I helped to knock down whole cities—I was sorry for the people in them, of course. But even whilst I was doing it—yes, even when the bombs were falling on me in London—I could not help saying to myself, We are clearing the way for a gigantic reconstruction, a reconstruction such as the world has never seen before." For a moment, the Professor's eyes were alight with an old enthusiasm. The glow died down. "The chance has been missed," he said. "And it will never come again."

"If it is missed," said Mr. Behrens, "it won't be your fault. When your paper is published—"

"Ah, my paper," said the Professor. "I am afraid that too much reliance has been placed on that. You cannot change human nature with a piece of paper."

"You can't if it isn't published."

The Professor looked up sharply. "I trust," he said, "that you are not going to turn what has been a very pleasant conversation into the channels of politics."

"I'm not a politician," said Mr. Behrens. "I'm a policeman. Of a sort. I can show you my credentials if you like."

"Don't bother," said the Professor. "I was warned that you might be coming. It was not made clear to me how you could help, though."

"I can only help," he said, "if you tell me what's been happening."

"Silly things. Stupid things. Things one hardly wants to talk about." He hesitated: "Letters. Telephone calls. We had a word for it in my country. *Nadelstich*. You would translate it as pin-prickery."

"When did it start?"

"About six months ago."

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"None at [illegible]ade all his plans. As soon as his sister's fit to [illegible]e both going out to Canada."

"Why Can[illegible]

"That's w[illegible] family came from. He says they've got a really ef[illegible]ecurity service out there, too. If *they* say they're go[illegible]look after you, they do it."

"We [illegible]hat one," said Mr. Calder. "Look here—you knew Ni[illegible]on as well as anyone. Better than most. Have you [illegible]y idea why—or, more to the point, how—anyone cou[illegible]ave been getting at him?"

"Apart from politics, you mean?"

Apart from politics. This wasn't the first attack, was it?"

"He'd had letters. And telephone calls. The sort of thing every public man gets."

"General abuse? Or specific?"

"I don't follow you."

Mr. Calder said, patiently, "There are two ways of attacking a public man. You can pick on some large, popularly believed sort of lie. If the man's a Jew, he's financially crooked. If he went to the London School of Economics and wears a red tie, he's a Communist. If he's a bachelor, he's homosexual. If you go on repeating the lie long and loud enough, someone will believe it in the end. The other method is to pick up some incident in their past life. It may be something quite silly, which wouldn't matter twopence if it was you or me—but which can be magnified out of all proportion if you're a public figure. You know what I mean?"

"Yes," said Redmayne. "I know exactly what you mean." He sat, staring into his glass and then said, "Well, he was a bachelor—"

The disposal of paper is a recurrent headache in government departments. Some of it can be destroyed, and some of it must clearly be kept handy, but the bulk of it falls into that middle class of documents which no-one can see any immediate use for, but which may conceivably be wanted some day. Having filled an abandoned m[illegible]factory near Staines [illegible]dge, the Records Depart[illegible]s now taken over an [illegible]rplane hanger at Brookland[illegible]ast filling that up too.

"Five cubic yards of pa[illegible]k," said the custodian to Mr. B[illegible]hrens. "And it's g[illegible]orse. I haven't the staff to cope with it."

Mr. Behrens sympathised. He had found that a little sympathy went a long way with minor officials. "I'll do the searching myself," he said, "if you could just put me on the right track. For instance, I imagine that you index this stuff by departments. The papers I want would have come from the old M.I.5."

"The worst of the lot," said the custodian.

"I can tell you the approximate year of origin too. This would have originated at Blenheim in late 1940."

"When would it have been filed?"

"Probably after the end of the war."

"We got a lot of stuff from Blenheim in 1946. That's all at Staines, though."

Mr. Behrens went to Staines.

Late that afternoon he unearthed a bundle of yellow dockets. They were labelled: "Routine interrogation reports: Nov.-Dec. 1940. A-L." They appeared to be curiously incomplete.

He read them through, and then pressed the bell. When the official shuffled up, Mr. Behrens said to him, "Has anyone else been having a look at these particular records lately?"

The official said that he really couldn't say. All sorts of people came down every day to see papers. All *he* had to do was to be satisfied about their credentials. *He* couldn't keep a record of what papers they looked at.

Mr. Behrens reflected that if you paid people as little as they probably paid this particular civil servant it was idle to expect any enthusiastic or efficient service. He went back to London.

He had booked himself a room at Dons-in-London (or the "Dilly" Club), which occupies two large houses north of Lord's Cricket Ground and has the worst food and the best wine in London. It also has a unique library of classical pornography and several complete sets of works by Dickens, Trollope and Thackeray. Mr. Behrens always used the D-I-L when he could, since he could rely on meeting a number of his cronies there.

"I understand that Sand-Douglas is up in London," he said to Mr. Calder. "I wanted to have a word with him—he was at Blenheim in 1940. You probably remember him. Why don't you join us at dinner?"

"*After* dinner," said Mr. Calder firmly.

At seven o'clock, Mr. Behrens alighted from the Bakerloo tube at Marlborough Road Station and started up towards the street. The evening rush was over, and the long escalator was nearly empty. Mr. Behrens sailed sedately upwards, wrapt in

meditation. At the top he gave up his ticket and dawdled out into the street.

There were very few people about in the Finchley Road. Mr. Behrens noticed a policeman, strolling along the opposite pavement in a purposeful way which suggested that he was coming off duty and heading for home. Mr. Behrens crossed the road. When he reached the pavement, he stopped so abruptly that the man who had been crossing behind him bumped into him.

Mr. Behrens whirled round, glared at him, and said, "Why are you following me?"

"What chew talking about," said the man. He was stout, bald and unremarkable except for a twisted upper lip which seemed to give him some difficulty in enunciating.

"You've been following me for more than an hour," said Mr. Behrens. "And doing it very badly."

"You're making a nerror there," said the man. Mr. Behrens was blocking his way, and he dodged to one side to get past him.

Mr. Behrens whipped up his umbrella and thrust the metal tip, hard, into the man's crutch. The man let out a scream.

"Now then," said the policeman. "What's all this?"

The man was doubled up, speechless. Mr. Behrens said, "This gentleman has been making a nuisance of himself. He accosted me, and tried to sell me some most unpleasant pictures."

"Thass a lie," said the man. But his eyes were flickering from side to side. "I never did anything to him. He poked me with his umbrella."

"*Did* you offer to sell anything to this gentleman?"

"Course I didn't."

"He's got them in his coat pocket," said Mr. Behrens.

"Thass a lie too." The man clapped a hand into his pocket, and his expression changed. He drew out the post-card-sized folder. As he did so, it fell open disclosing the photographs inside it.

"Do you mind if I have a look at those?" said the constable.

"It's a plant," said the man. "I never—"

He handed off the constable, dodged past Mr. Behrens, and started off up the pavement. Mr. Behrens, reversing his umbrella, caught him round one ankle with the handle. The man crossed his legs and fell heavily.

"You'll have to come along to the station," said the constable. "I take it you'll be preferring a charge, sir."

"I shall certainly do so," said Mr. Behrens. "Here is my card. I think it disgraceful if one cannot pay a visit to London without being subjected to the attention of men like that."

Harry Sand-Douglas was a very large man, with a pink face, a mop of iron-grey hair, and eyes the colour of forget-me-nots. He finished his helping of marmalade pudding, pushed back his plate, and lit a pipe.

"I think you did quite right," he said. "I hope you can make the charge stick."

"It might be difficult actually to charge him," said Mr. Behrens. "All I really hoped to do was to get rid of him. He was annoying me."

"They'll hold him overnight," said Mr. Calder. He had joined them at the port stage. "If you go round to the police station and withdraw the charge, they'll probably let him go. Then we could put a tail on him, and see who's employing him. That really would be useful."

"It's an idea," said Mr. Behrens. "I'll telephone Elfe tonight. The interrogation originals at Staines were incomplete. Someone's been through them. But Harry tells me that duplicates *were* kept."

"They were microfilmed," said Sand-Douglas. "They were too bulky to be kept in any other way. When I think of the amount of paper we filled up questioning perfectly harmless people!"

"Where are the microfilms stored?"

"I've an idea it's somewhere at Oxford. I can find out. I'll ask Happold. He was in charge of that side of it."

"Good heavens," said Behrens. "Is Happold still alive? He must be ninety."

"Ninety-one," said Sand-Douglas. "And bathes in the Cherwell every morning."

At half-past ten Mr. Behrens said to Mr. Calder, "Why don't you stay the night here? I'm sure they can find you a bed."

"It's kind of you," said Mr. Calder, "but I told Rasselas I'd be back. He'll be worried if I don't turn up."

He caught the last train from Victoria to Swanley, picked up his car which he had left there and drove back to Lamperdown, under a half moon, through the quiet lanes, which smelled of tar and honeysuckle. A question about Mr. Behrens' assailant was teasing him. It was a matter of timing. The morning would probably solve it. He put it out of his mind.

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Half a mile from the cottage a grey shape loomed. Mr. Calder braked sharply, and pulled the car into a field gate. The great dog ran up to him and stopped, head cocked.

"All right," said Mr. Calder. "Message received and understood." He opened the gate, and manhandled his car in. It was a slight slope, and it was not a light car, but there was a surprising strength in Mr. Calder's barrel chest and stocky legs. When the car had been hidden, he started to walk home. The dog ran ahead, silent as a cloud.

Two hundred yards from the cottage a roughly metalled track forked to the left. It led to a field, which was rented to a farmer. Rasselas went forward slowly. At a bend in the track he stopped again.

A van was parked, facing towards him. The offside door was open, and there was a man standing beside it. Mr. Calder turned softly, and went back the way he had come. Fifty yards down the track there was a gap in the hedge. He wriggled through it on hands and knees, and crept up the inside of the hedge until he could see the top of the van. Then, very gently, an inch at a time, he edged forward until he could see the whole van.

The man was standing beside the open door of the cab, one foot on the step. He was watching the track, and had one hand in his pocket. He looked remarkably wide awake. Mr. Calder didn't like it. A van suggested numbers.

Half an hour passed slowly. Then there came the clink of shod feet against stone, and three other forms loomed.

Rasselas, who was lying almost on top of Mr. Calder inside the hedge, stiffened, and his lips drew back from his long, white teeth. Mr. Calder clamped a hand firmly down on his head.

Two of the newcomers were carrying something heavy between them. It looked like an ammunition box. They opened the back of the van, pushed it in, and climbed in beside it. The third man got up beside the driver. Under its own momentum the van rolled quietly down the track. As it reached the road, Mr. Calder heard the engine start up.

Not being a man who believed in taking chances against professional opposition, Mr. Calder spent the remaining hours of darkness in the ditch.

At a quarter to four, as the sky was whitening and the birds were starting to talk, he walked up the track and approached his cottage with caution. Rasselas moved beside him. They avoided the doors, and went in by one of the side windows,

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which Mr. Calder opened with a long flat knife. Then, together, they made a very careful search. They both worked by sight, but Rasselas had the additional faculty of smell to help him. And it was he who unearthed both of the booby-traps. One was under the gas cooker, operated by the gas switch. The other was in the cistern of the lavatory, operated by the plug. Neither was exactly original, but both, as Mr. Calder noted, had been very neatly and professionally done.

He telephoned Mr. Fortescue, at his home in Leatherhead, and gave him the registration number of the van, and a brief account of what had happened.

Mr. Fortescue, who sounded very wide awake although it was still short of six in the morning, said, "Someone's got on to you very quickly, haven't they?"

"I thought the same," said Mr. Calder. "And another thing—they were trained men, working under discipline."

There was a long silence. Then Mr. Fortescue said, "When you come up to town you'd better come to the Bank."

After breakfast, Mr. Calder recovered his car, and drove it back to the cottage. He was nearly out of petrol, but there was a can in his garage. When he pulled at the door it stuck, as it very often did. He gave it a sharp jerk. As he did so, the garage disintegrated and the door came out to meet him.

When Mr. Behrens arrived at Swiss Cottage Police Station, he sensed that something had happened. The station sergeant showed him straight up to the CID room where he found Detective Inspector Larrymore in conference with a red-faced detective sergeant and a youngish, black-haired superintendent from the Special Branch.

"What's gone wrong," said Mr. Behrens, pleasantly.

"You've heard?" said Larrymore.

"I've heard nothing," said Mr. Behrens, "but you've all got faces like a wet Monday morning, and I've never known a station sergeant be affable before, so I guessed—"

"I'm afraid," said the Special Branch man, "that they've pulled a fast one on us. I got instructions from Commander Elfe late last night that a man might be released from here in the course of the morning, and that he was to be followed. I've got a two-car team waiting outside."

"Then—?"

"He was released at ten o'clock last night."

"What!"

Larrymore said, "Two men turned up, with a car. They

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had full D.I.5 credentials. They took over the prisoner. The man in charge ought to have checked back—"

The red-faced detective sergeant went even redder, and Mr. Behrens guessed that he had been the man in charge, and felt sorry for him.

"It's easy to be wise after the event," he said. "Exactly what credentials did they produce?"

"They had identity cards, with photographs, sir. As far as I could see they were properly signed and had the official stamp on them. And a letter on official notepaper to the officer in charge here, authorising the handover. But it wasn't only that, sir—"

The Special Branch man looked up sharply, and said, "What else, then?"

"Well sir, it's difficult to say—but they *looked* right. When I was a recruit we did a three weeks' course with the Security people. As a matter of fact, I thought I recognised one of them as an instructor on the course. It was some time ago, of course, and I must have been mistaken—"

An uncomfortable silence was broken by the ringing of the telephone. Larrymore took the call and said, "It's for you, Mr. Behrens."

It was Mr. Fortescue. He said, "Would you come round to the Bank at once. Use a police car. It can drop you at the Abbey, and you can use the back way. Don't waste any time."

"Has something happened?"

"Yes," said Mr. Fortescue. "Calder's in Gravesend Hospital. He's not dead, but he's quite far down the danger list."

"I got the message at my Whitehall office. when I got there this morning," said Mr. Fortescue. "Calder must have been conscious, because he gave the number to the senior houseman at Gravesend, and it was he who rang me. It must have happened between six and nine in the morning. Because Calder had already telephoned me . . ."

He told Mr. Behrens about it.

"I see," said Mr. Behrens. "He must have missed a third trap. They're very thorough, these people, aren't they? Were you able to trace the van?"

"The police traced it. It was stolen in the Borough yesterday."

"At about what time? Do they know?"

"Before two o'clock. Between one and two." Before Mr.

Behrens could say anything, Mr. Fortescue stopped him. "I hadn't missed the point," he said. "Take it with the business at Swiss Cottage Police Station last night, and it adds up to something I'm not at all keen on thinking about. I gather that I'm to see the Prime Minister this afternoon. And I've gathered something else, too. Maver is *not* being invited to the meeting."

From Mr. Fortescue's office you could hear Big Ben quite clearly. First, the four sets of warning notes: then, the ten strokes of the hour. It wasn't until the last of them had died away that either of them spoke again. It was Mr. Behrens who broke the silence. He said, "Of course, it was always on the cards that something like that might happen. It's happened often enough in other countries. We've never had it here. I think I'd better go down to Gravesend. If Calder can still talk, he'll find it easier to talk to me than anyone else."

"Very well," said Mr. Fortescue. "I don't need to tell you to be careful."

"I shall be extremely careful," Mr. Behrens assured him.

He was so careful that it took him three hours to reach Gravesend, and he entered the hospital by the tradesmen's entrance. He found a policeman standing in the corridor that

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led to the private wards, identified himself, and was allowed into an anteroom. Here he found a grim-faced Sister, seated at a table, guarding the inner door. She said, "No-one can go in without Dr. Henfry's permission."

"Then perhaps," said Mr. Behrens, "you would be kind enough to send for Dr. Henfry."

This was clearly a breach of protocol. Sisters in hospitals do not run errands for visitors. She rang a bell, summoning a porter. The porter disappeared, and silence fell.

Dr. Henfry, when he arrived five minutes later, was large and red-headed, the sort of man who would be a welcome addition to the pack in any hospital rugger team. He said, "If your name's Behrens, you can come in for five minutes."

"Thank you," said Mr. Behrens.

"Will you want the blood transfusions, doctor?"

"I'll let you know," said Dr. Henfry. "Come along, Mr. Behrens. And very quiet, please."

The bed in the room was entirely hidden by screens. Dr. Henfry closed the door carefully, and bolted it. Then he moved the nearest screen and Mr. Behrens saw Mr. Calder. He was sitting up in bed, reading *The Times*. On the table by his bed was the remains of a pork pie and two bottles of beer.

"It's not what we like to give our invalids for breakfast," said Dr. Henfry with a grin. "Particularly when they're at death's door. But it's all I could manage. I had to buy it myself and smuggle it in my instrument case."

"Do I gather," said Mr. Behrens, "that you are *not* dying?"

"That's right," said Mr. Calder. "But you and Dr. Henfry are the only people who know it, and it's going to stay that way for a bit. The deputation who called at my cottage last night left a third visiting card, in the form of a few pounds of gelignite, controlled by a trembler fuse and a detonator. They left it in the inspection pit in my garage. If I'd driven the car over it, I'd have been blown to Jericho. Luckily I set it off from outside by banging the door. The door hit me and knocked me cold. But it also protected me. I was still unconscious when the milkman came along. He put me straight into his van, bless him, and brought me down here. I'd come round by that time, and I realised what a stroke of luck the whole thing was. I put Dr. Henfry wise, and he's done the rest."

"I've had a gaggle of reporters round here already," said Dr. Henfry. "I told them you might recover—with luck and devoted nursing. You'd had three blood transfusions already."

"Excellent," said Mr. Calder.

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"I'd better take Mr. Behrens out now, or Sister will start worrying. I'll show him the back way in along the balcony."

When they were alone together, Mr. Calder said, "You can tell Fortescue, of course. But no-one else. I'm going to clear out as soon as it's dark. Dr. Henfry is fetching me."

"I assume you're going under cover?"

"We both are. We'll use Mrs. Palfrey's."

"Is this just general caution . . . or something special?"

Mr. Calder was busy pouring out the second bottle of beer and did not answer for a moment. Then he said, "That fuse on the plastic explosive under the grill was micrometer set. I shouldn't have needed to turn the gas on. The lightest touch on the switch would have set it off. When I'd immobilised it, I took some photographs. The whole thing had been beautifully concealed. Even if you stooped down you could hardly see a thing. All the wires were taped, and the tapes themselves had been fish-tailed and folded under at the end. Do you remember that sergeant at the demolition school. 'Five minutes extra work, gentlemen. But it may well make the difference between success and failure.' *He* always fish-tailed the ends of *his* tapes. It was when I saw those tapes that I decided to go under cover."

"I have on my books at this moment," said Mr. Fortescue to the Prime Minister, "twenty men and four women, any two of whom—they usually work in pairs—I might have allotted to this particular assignment. I selected Calder and Behrens, and I telephoned both of them on Wednesday evening. The line which I used is, I can assure you, secure. They both saw me on Thursday morning. It is true that they came quite openly, and my office in Richmond Terrace might be watched—although, as Commander Elfe will tell you, the security precautions are such that it would be very difficult for anyone to do so without themselves being observed."

Commander Elfe, who was the only other person present, nodded and said, "Not impossible, but so difficult that I think we might rule it out."

"In any event," went on Mr. Fortescue, "Calder and Behrens were not the only people who saw me that morning. I had routine matters to discuss with at least six other members of my department."

"So," said the Prime Minister, "up to that time, no-one would have any reason to connect them with this particular job. What did they do next?"

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"Behrens visited the Records Department in the new Defence building and went from there to call on Professor Gottlieb. Calder went to Campden Hill to talk to the Inspector in charge of the Nicholson inquiry."

"At either of which points they could have been picked up and followed."

"Oh. certainly," said Mr. Fortescue. "Only Mr. Behrens did not reach the Gottlieb flat until a quarter past two, and Mr. Calder went to Campden Hill even later—at three o'clock. The van which was used for the visit to Mr. Calder's cottage was stolen between one and two. It was clearly stolen for that job, and was abandoned when it had been done."

The Prime Minister looked at Elfe, who looked at Mr. Fortescue, and said, "What it amounts to is this: the only people who could have known by midday that Behrens was on this job were the staff of the Defence Ministry. If they knew Behrens was on it, they would have assumed Calder was involved as well."

"I'm afraid that's right," said Mr. Fortescue.

"Gentlemen," said the Prime Minister, "I am not an alarmist. And thirty years in politics has taught me not to jump to conclusions. But if you add that last fact to certain others—the way in which Behrens' assailant was liberated; the method and execution of the attack on Calder—I'm afraid that a very distasteful possibility emerges."

"You mean," said Commander Elfe bluntly, "that Security Executive are playing politics."

In a comfortable bedsitting room, in that area of bedsitting rooms which lies between the station and the Rugby football ground at Twickenham, Mr. Behrens poured out a cup of tea for Mr. Calder, and said, "How many so far?"

"Seventeen near certainties," said Mr. Calder. "Seventeen cases of public servants driven out. Nine of them have gone to live abroad. Two are in institutions. Six, including Bax, have taken their own lives. And, if those are the ones we know about, you can be certain that the true total is twice or three times as great."

Mr. Behrens said, "It was the technique which convinced me, much more than all that working out of times and places. It was such an exact reproduction of the interrogation techniques which both sides brought to horrible perfection during the war. If you wanted to break a man down, what did you do? First, you made him uncomfortable. It was far more

demoralising for a man to be cold, or filthy, or sleepless, or thirsty than actually to be hurt. Discomfort weakens. Torture builds up a resistance. The Russians discovered that long ago. The interrogator's second weapon was to find something—it didn't matter what—but something which his victim was ashamed of. Some weakness, some slip. If he harped on it skilfully he could take the man to pieces."

"I know that," said Mr. Calder. He stirred his tea, and looked round the comfortable, lower-middle-class sitting room. Mrs. Palfrey's grandfather and grandmother stared back at him from fading brown oleographs over the mantelpiece. He found reassurance in their Victorian rigidity. He said, "Public servants are sitting ducks. They loathe fuss. They eschew scandal. And they can't run away. That's the point. They're nailed to their jobs. Take a man like Nicholson. He had to be within reach of Westminster and Whitehall. The only way to go out was to go right out. I wonder what they had on him. And how many times he paid up."

The arrival of Mrs. Palfrey, with a kettle of hot water and the evening paper, saved Mr. Behrens from having to reply. He found an item at the foot of the front page which seemed to interest him. He read it out: "A party of birdwatchers on the Cooling Marshes yesterday discovered, in one of the salt-water dykes, the body of a man. He has not yet been identified. The following description has been issued. Age, about forty-five. Height, five foot six. Stoutly built. A marked malformation of the upper lip."

"Do we know him?" said Mr. Calder.

"My acquaintance with him," said Mr. Behrens, "was limited to poking him with my umbrella. I cannot regard him as a great loss."

"Quick work, all the same," said Mr. Calder. "They don't believe in leaving loose ends about, do they? I wonder what they'll do next . . ."

Richard Redmayne and Paula Gottlieb sitting on the seat in Green Park made a handsome couple. His conventional dress could not conceal a certain long-limbed, co-ordinated strength, the product of a school which was unfashionable enough to think athletic prowess important; the girl, dark, lively and very young.

She said, "Have you heard from Mr. Nicholson?"

"He's arrived in Canada," said Richard. "I had a short letter. He and his sister have got a flat in Toronto. He says they're settling down very happily."

"'We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him, lived in his mild and magnificent eye, learned his great language, caught his clear accents, made him our pattern to live and to die.'"

"That's poetry," said Richard suspiciously.

"Robert Browning. *The Lost Leader*. You remember? 'Just for a handful of silver he left us.'"

"It wasn't money in his case," said Richard. "It was fear. How's your father?"

This change of subject did not appear to surprise Paula. She had reached a stage of intimacy with Richard when such sudden jumps were part of the fun. She said, "If only he'd make up his mind. It's the uncertainty which is so horrible. If he'd only tell me—tell someone—what it's all about. He just sits at home. He hardly goes out at all. I had a job to persuade him to go out this morning and get his hair cut."

"That's two o'clock striking now," said Richard. "I've got to get back. But I'll walk home with you first."

As soon as Paula opened the door of the flat, she knew something was wrong.

"What's up?" said Richard.

"Where's Fritz?" There was panic in the girl's voice. "We left him to guard the house... he always runs out to meet me."

Through the open door of the drawing room they could glimpse the chaos within. Overturned chairs, broken glass, something seeping under the door and staining the hall carpet.

Richard said urgently, "Don't go in there—stop." But he found himself unable to hold her. She burst past him, and threw herself into the room. As he grabbed the telephone, he heard her give a single, choked scream.

When the police and her father arrived together five minutes later, she was still on her knees, sobbing uncontrollably, with a brown and black head cradled on her lap...

In the hot, blacked-out room, half laboratory, half office, two men pored over the microfilm reader. "It's here if it's anywhere," said Sand-Douglas. "November 2nd, 1940. That was the day he arrived. The main interrogation would have started the day after. We usually gave them a night's rest."

Old Mr. Happold, as thin and as indestructible as dried seaweed, fed a second roll of microfilm into the reader and adjusted the reading glass. He was unaffected by the heat and closeness of the room. "This looks like the one," he said. "Do you know exactly what it is we're looking for?"

"We're looking for a name," said Sand-Douglas. "A name, out of the past. And I do believe"—he wiped a hand across to clear the sweat out of his eyes—"yes, that's it. I'll have to use your telephone. I think we'll risk an open line this time."

Professor Gottlieb looked round the table. There were four men there. Commander Elfe of the Special Branch he knew; and he had met Mr. Fortescue once, and was aware that he was connected with Security. The other two were a thick set man whom they called Mr. Calder, and Mr. Behrens.

"I don't think," said the Professor, "that they could do anything more horrible than they did this morning. It was a mistake. Since there is nothing worse they can do, I have no motive not to speak. When I came to this country in 1940, I brought with me a secret of which I was bitterly ashamed. I am not a man of action. I could never have arranged my own escape from Prague. I should not have known how to start. It was arranged for me. When I told my story to your interrogators, I said that it was arranged by the Czech underground. That was a lie. It was arranged by the Germans. They bartered my escape with me for some information I was able to give them. I didn't know why they wanted it—that's no excuse. It led to the execution of two of my colleagues in Prague University. I thought, for a long time, the secret had died with them. I still have no idea how anyone could have found out."

"The man who interrogated you," said Mr. Fortescue, "also dealt with other compatriots of yours. He heard a rumour from them, and was able to verify it after the war from German sources. But please go on."

"There is no more. Seven years ago, when I began to be well known here, and well paid—the blackmail started. For seven years I have paid away about a third of all my income. Lately the demands were increased. I stuck in my toes. Different forms of pressure were applied. I could do nothing to stop them. I was afraid that, if I complained, the whole truth would come out. I see now that I have been stupid. I should have spoken at once. But it is difficult to see these things when you are on your own."

"Have you any idea at all who the blackmailers were?" asked Commander Elfe.

"None at all. I never saw them, or spoke to them, except on the telephone. I drew the money every month in notes,

and sent it to what I imagine was an accommodation address." He paused, and looked round the table at the four men. Mr. Calder and Mr. Behrens were looking impassive. The burly Commander Elfe had a scowl on his face. Mr. Fortescue was looking out of the window. He had a cold and clinical glint in his eye. It reminded Professor Gottlieb of a surgeon he had once watched, weighing up the chances of a delicate and critical operation. "And that's really all I can tell you," he said. "Do you think there is any chance of catching these men?"

Mr. Fortescue swivelled his head round so that he was looking directly at the Professor. He said, "Oh yes. We now know who these men are, and where they operate from. It will be comparatively simple to render them harmless. But if we are actually to catch and convict them, we shall need a lot of luck—and your help..."

"I am glad that my worst suspicions were wrong," said the Prime Minister, "and I apologise for them." He had invited Ian Maver, the head of D.I.5, to dinner, and they were sitting together over their brandy.

"Not so far wrong," said Maver. The apology and the brandy were working on him. "Most of them are either ex-M.I.5 or ex-policemen. The leader is a man called Cotter. I knew him quite well. A guardsman. A very able officer, an excellent linguist and a good organiser. A bit ruthless for peacetime operations. He left us in the mid-fifties. I think he was disappointed over promotion. Then he set up this private inquiry organisation, Cotter's Detectives. We've been using him quite a bit lately ourselves. Guarding VIPs and that sort of thing."

"And it was his men who were put in charge of Nicholson?"

"That wasn't very clever," said Maver, "but if they keep us short of policemen it's bound to happen. Businesses use private gunmen to look after their payrolls now. Private watchmen patrol building estates. Private guards for VIPs? It was a logical step."

"How did you find out about him?"

"We went right back to the record of Gottlieb's first interrogation. Cotter was the man who did it. We got a cross-reference when we found out that Cotter and one of his men, Lawrie, had been the two 'referees' given by Smythe when he got his job in our Records Department. That was a bad slip, and it was entirely my fault."

The Prime Minister was aware that the head of D.I.5 was offering him his resignation if he chose to take it. He rejected the offering. His opinion of Ian Maver had changed in the course of the evening.

He said, "Everyone's allowed one mistake. Even in politics. What are you doing about Smythe?"

"For the moment, we're leaving him where he is. He happens to form rather a useful channel of communication. One of his jobs is to monitor the Records room. If we want to get a piece of information across to Cotter, without appearing to do so, all that's necessary is a little calculated indiscretion between two of our men when searching the files."

"Do I gather from that," said the Prime Minister, "that some definite action is contemplated?"

"Mr. Fortescue has the matter in hand," said Maver.

"It's not going to be at all easy," said Mr. Fortescue, "but we have three points in our favour." He ticked them off with *one finger of his right hand.*

"First, they have no reason at all to think that we suspect them. And, of course, they must continue in this happy state of ignorance. Secondly, we can, if we are careful, leak information to them through Smythe. Third, and most important, I think they are bound to react to Professor Gottlieb. Like all bullies, if one of their victims rebels and they do nothing about it, other victims will follow suit. I am arranging for Professor Gottlieb to show fight."

"They might go for his daughter," said Elfe.

"I had thought of that myself," said Mr. Fortescue, and Elfe looked up sharply.

"Do I understand that you're going to use the girl as bait?"

"It seems to me the simplest of a number of possible methods," said Mr. Fortescue. "We'll keep the Professor in town, and put such a ring fence of guards round him that they can't touch him. As a preliminary precaution, the girl will be sent into the country. Not too far. I had in mind the Thetford area in Norfolk. The army used it as a battle school during the war, and parts of it are still quite deserted."

"And you're going to let them know she's there?"

"It will come to their ears in about a week's time."

"I don't like it," said Elfe. "It's too risky."

"Any plan will be risky," said Mr. Fortescue. "This plan will, I think, have less risk than most. I always prefer to play a match on ground of my own choosing."

"Who are you going to send with her? Calder—or Behrens?"

"If I sent either of them, it would be stupid of Cotter to go near her and Cotter is not a stupid man. No. I had in mind that Nicholson's secretary, young Redmayne, would be the man for the job. They know each other, and are, I believe, good friends. They'll be suitably chaperoned, of course."

Harwood Farm lay at the end of a mile of lane. It was a pleasant, rambling, yellow-brick building with two vast barns. It had been empty for some months, since the last tenant-farmer had moved out. Its fields were now farmed by a man who came over occasionally from Tunstock.

One of the pleasantest features of their stay, thought Richard Redmayne, had been the efforts they had made to bring the place back to life. For a fortnight he and Paula and the dour Mrs. Mason had washed and scrubbed and scoured and sandpapered and painted. Paula had revealed several unexpected skills. First she had dismantled and cleaned the engine and dynamo which supplied them with electricity. Then, with the aid of a carload of technical stores from Norwich, she had stepped up the output, so that bulbs which had previously shone dimly now glowed as brightly as though they were on mains.

"My father taught me not to be afraid of electricity," she said. "It's just like water. You see water coming out of a tap. A nice steady flow. Halve the outlet, and you double the power. Like this." She was holding a length of hosepipe in her hand, swilling down the choked gutters in the yard. As she pinched the end of the hose, a thin jet of water hissed out.

"All right," said Richard, ducking. "You needn't demonstrate it. I understand the principle. I didn't know it applied to electricity, that's all."

"Tomorrow," said Paula, "I'm going to get Mrs. Mason to stoke up the boiler, and I'm going to run a hose into the big barn. I'll use a proper stopcock, and we'll build up the pressure. Then you'll see what steam can do. Did you know that if you got a fine enough jet and sufficient pressure you could cut metal with steam?"

"For goodness' sake, don't try it," said Richard. "We shall blow ourselves up."

"You're a coward," said Paula. "By the way, did you see *The Times* this morning? It's got something about Daddy in it."

It was a paragraph on the Home News page. It said that Professor Gottlieb was confident of finishing his final revision of the White Paper on Planning before the end of the month. The Professor had held a news conference, in which he had said that certain minor technical difficulties which had been holding him up had been satisfactorily disposed of.

"He's trailing his coat," said Paula.

"What do you mean?"

"You must think me an idiot if you imagine I don't know what's going on. He's provoking those people to attack him, isn't he? And that's why I've been stowed away here, to be out of harm's way."

"Well—" said Richard.

"And you're my guard. There's no need to apologise. I'm enjoying it—when I stop worrying about Daddy."

"He'll be well looked after," said Richard.

Better looked after, he couldn't help thinking, than Paula herself. He recalled the single afternoon of instruction he had been given—on the range in Wellington Barracks—with the automatic pistol which he now carried, tucked under his left armpit by day and placed under his pillow each night. It was comforting to have a gun, but he was still far from certain that he could hit anything with it. Mrs. Mason, he knew, was connected with Fortescue's organisation, but if real trouble developed . . .

"What are *you* looking so serious about?" said Paula.

"Nothing," said Richard. "I was working out what we had to do to the barn now that we've got the house in order."

Visitors to the farm were few but regular; and already their visits had fallen into a pattern. The grocer from East Harling delivered on Tuesday and Friday. The fishmonger and butcher came out from Diss on Thursday. Twice every day the little red post van came bowling down the lane with letters and newspapers. And on Friday the dustcart arrived to carry away the week's rubbish.

Mrs. Mason, doubtless acting on orders, allowed none of them near the house but went out to the gate to collect their offerings herself. To Richard, they were blurred faces seen behind a windscreen, except for the rubbish collectors, whose names were Ernest and Leonard, and with whom he had exchanged local gossip.

The postman was a thickset, cheerful man. He operated from Diss, and had taken over the round which included Harwood Farm on the day before Richard and Paula arrived.

He lodged in a back street and, although apparently a temporary, carried out his work in an efficient manner.

Indeed, so conscientious was he, that in the evenings, after his rounds were completed, he would often take the van and tour the district, memorising roads and lanes, and houses and farms, and the position of telephone kiosks and AA boxes.

That Thursday night, when he returned to his lodging, he found a postcard propped up on the mantelpiece. The front showed a stout lady, in a bathing dress, whose toe was being eaten by a crab. On the back was written: "Uncle Tom and the three boys planning to start for country tomorrow." It was signed, "Edna," and the name was underlined three times.

"Three-line whip," said the postman to himself. He went across to the cupboard and took out a violin case. But what he took out of it was certainly not a violin . . .

Friday was a perfect day. The sun rose through a cloak of early morning mist, scattered it, and sailed in majesty across the heavens. Life at Harwood Farm pursued its unexciting course. The grocer came with groceries, and the postman on his morning round stopped for a gossip with Mrs. Mason. He seemed to do most of the talking. Mrs. Mason contented herself with nodding. She was a woman of few words. Her only relaxation was *The Times* crossword puzzle which she regularly finished in the kitchen when they had given it up in the drawing room. In the afternoon Paula rigged her steam hose, a fearsome contraption of plastic pipe and chromium fitting, and cleaned out the cowstalls at the end of the barn. The thin, scalding jet stripped the filth of ages from the floors and wooden walls with the speed of a rotary plane.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when the dustcart drove up. The driver reversed the lumbering vehicle in the space in front of the gate. He did it clumsily, crashing his gears, as if he was unused to driving it. Three men got out of the back. They walked quickly through the yard, ignoring the two dustbins, and pushed into the kitchen.

Mrs. Mason jumped up, saw the gun in the hand of the leading man, and said, calmly, "What do you want?"

"Take it easy," said the man, "and you won't get hurt." As he said this the second man walked round behind her and smacked her across the back of the neck with a leather-covered cosh. The third man caught her as she fell forward.

"Put her in that cupboard," said the leader. "There's a bolt on the outside."

Mr. Calder, turning the post van in at the top of the lane,

saw signs of the ambush. The surface of the road was broken where the heavy dustcart had lurched to a halt; and the hedge was broken too. Mr. Calder jumped out to investigate, and found Ernest and Leonard in the ditch, their elbows and ankles strapped and their heads in paper dust sacks. He undid them and they sat up, swearing. Mr. Calder cut them short.

"There's a public telephone three hundred yards down the main road," he said. "Get there as quick as you can—ask for this number—and just say the word '*Action.*'"

Leonard, who was the younger and more spirited of the two, said, "Couldn't we get after those bastards first?"

"No," said Mr. Calder. "You'd be in the way. Just do what I told you. And quick."

As they lumbered off down the road, he got back into his van. They would hear him coming, but that couldn't be helped. Speed was now more important than surprise. Anyway, he had no intention of driving up to the house. He had long ago located a field track, usable in dry weather, which led off the lane to a point behind the barn . . .

The farmhouse being old, and its walls thick, Richard, who was writing in the drawing room, had heard nothing of the goings-on in the kitchen. He did, however, hear heavy footsteps coming along the stone-floored passage; footsteps which could not belong to Mrs. Mason or Paula. He had time to get his gun out. It wasn't a bad shot for a first attempt. He missed Cotter, who led the rush through the door, but hit the man behind him in the knee.

Cotter, steadying himself, shot Richard through the right shoulder, knocking him off his chair on to the floor. Then he picked up his gun and took no further notice of him.

"We'll look after Lawrie in a moment," he said. "We've got to grab the girl before she runs for it."

It was unfortunate for them that, being in a hurry, they came out of the door and into the yard together. Cotter realised their mistake when he heard the girl's voice from behind them. She said, "This gun's loaded, both barrels. Even I couldn't miss you from here."

The two men turned. Cotter's gun was back in its shoulder-holster. The other man had not drawn his. And the girl was holding a twelve-bore, double-barrelled sporting rifle.

"Into the barn," she said.

They moved slowly ahead of her. Cotter looked at the door as he went through to see if he could slam it, but it was

too heavy and had been firmly wedged open with a stake.

"Down that end," she said. "Now. Take your guns out, slowly, and drop them on the ground."

The two men had spread themselves out. It was a deliberate movement. They knew very well that the odds were still on their side. As Cotter pulled his gun out and dropped it on to the floor in front of him, he let it fall even farther to one side, and shuffled after it. The other man did the same. The gun barrel wavered. They were now so far apart, that one shot could not hit both of them.

"What are you planning to do?" said Cotter, edging over a little farther. He was now almost up against the side wall of the barn. "Keep us here till it's dark?" He had seen the side door of the barn move, and guessed that it was the fourth man, the driver of the van, coming to lend a hand. Keep her attention, and the driver could jump her from behind. No point in shooting her.

Paula saw the danger out of the corner of her eye. She swung round, and fired both barrels. The first missed altogether. The second hit the driver full in the chest. As she fired, she dropped the gun, put out a hand without hurry, laid hold of the steam hosepipe and flicked open the faucet.

A jet of scalding steam, thin and sharp as a needle, hissed from the nozzle and seemed to hang in the air for a moment, then hit Cotter full in the face as he stooped for his gun. He went forward on to his knees. The hose followed him down, searing and stripping.

The second man got hold of his gun. Mr. Calder, standing square in the doorway of the barn, shot his legs from under him with his tommy gun.

When the carload of Special Branch men arrived they found Mr. Calder in the barn. The officer in charge was the same, dark-haired young man whom Mr. Behrens had encountered at the police station. He introduced himself to Mr. Calder as Superintendent Patrick Petrella.

"We got your message," he said, "and passed it on to London. Behrens will have rounded up Smythe and the others by now. I don't think they're going to give us much trouble. Cotter was the mainspring of the whole thing."

"He's a busted mainspring now," said Mr. Calder. "There's going to be a lot of clearing up to do. I've got three wounded men for you. And two dead."

"I've yet to learn," said Petrella, "that it's a crime to resist an armed attempt at kidnapping. She'll get a vote of thanks."

He moved across to the other end of the barn where two shapes lay, covered by sacks. "Which is Cotter?"

"This one," said Mr. Calder. "He isn't a very nice sight."

"Good God," said Petrella, shaken out of his phlegm. "What did she do that with?"

"She used a high-pressure steam hose," said Mr. Calder. "Cotter made a mistake. He killed her dog and mutiliated it. I know just how she felt. I've got a dog myself."

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bookshelf

HAMMOND INNES in his newest novel, *The Strode Venturer,* has taken two different and most unusual sorts of adventure and blended them together. Both are enormously exciting. The setting of one is Addu, part of a chain of coral atolls poised precariously near the Equator; the other is the board room of an impressive building in the heart of the City of London, the headquarters of a once prosperous, now ailing, shipping firm.

It is here that Peter Strode, traveller, visionary, gay adventurer, odd-man-out in the family which has inherited this vast mercantile empire, fights the rest of his relatives and fellow directors round the polished board-room table.

Concerned only with their own decreasing wealth, they are determined to sell out to the opposition, regardless of the suffering and ruin such action would bring in its train.

One of their fleet of ships, *The Strode Venturer,* with her master, the formidable drunken Captain Deacon, ploughing the dangerous, uncharted volcanic seas, bridges these two alien worlds.

It is difficult to say which of these battles is the more absorbing—on the one hand men fighting for their lives among the uncanny hunks of land emerging—and at times disappearing again into seas of boiling white water, leaving a trail of floating pumice; or the board room, where the life of a grand old firm is at stake.

Certainly one of the best as well as out-of-the-ordinary novels that this clever writer has ever done. (Collins, 21s.)

From the strange to the sublime. "All Glorious Within," Bruce Marshall's earlier story of a Roman Catholic priest, was one of his most likeable books. *Father Hilary's Holiday* is

of the same *genre* and tells how this Franciscan finds himself in the South American state of Tomasia at the very moment when the Communist infiltration of Fidel Castro is at its most dangerous. Further, it tells how Father Hilary comes to be gambling in a costly and fashionable casino, and how he finishes up in a cell in the highly unpleasant Santo Tomas prison.

Needless to say, all ends well and the priest returns from his holiday, if not wiser, certainly a more experienced man. (Constable, 21s.)

After the Act by Winston Graham comes nearer to his earlier success, "Marnie," than any of his other books in its background theme—the motives which govern good or evil.

It tells how Morris Scott, at the moment of his first great success as a dramatist, meets and falls in love with a young girl in Paris. He is married. His wife—intelligent, a good deal older than he, half an alcoholic, half an invalid—has supported him through the long, lean years of his struggle for recognition. In every way he is deeply in her debt. But the girl, Alexandra, is irresistibly lovely; young, fresh and avid for the love she so fully returns.

The climax which divides the book nearly in two, hits one like a sudden shock of cold water. And the twist at the very end is superb. (Hodder & Stoughton, 21s.)

Michael Sadleir's novel *Forlorn Sunset* is now in paperback. Not as well-known as his "Fanny by Gaslight," it has the same setting—that of London at the end of the last century with its sinister underworld. Absorbing and horrifying. (Pan, 5s.)

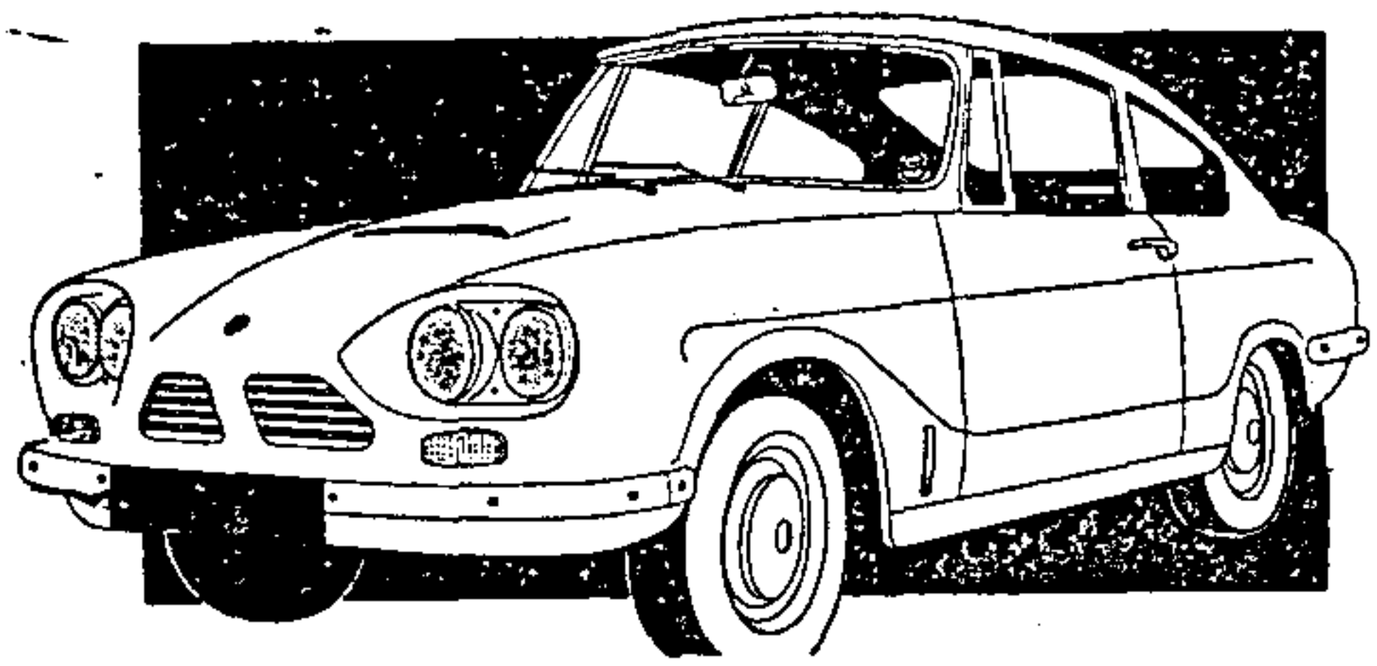
Terry Southern is the very bright young American who wrote the script of *Dr. Strangelove* for the screen. Two shortish novels of his, *Flash and Filigree* and *The Magic Christian*. are now paperbacked. (Penguin, 3s. 6d.)

"To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive..." wrote R. L. Stevenson, apparently anticipating the horrors awaiting the people of Brian Aldiss' *Non-Stop* since it is quoted on the title page.

This is early science fiction, though only recently paperbacked, and still stands out as one of the best. It is the story of a larger-than-life experiment which goes appallingly wrong and there is never a dull moment from the first page on. (Faber & Faber, 7s. 6d.)

Jan Dehane

man about cars



THE Bond Equipe GT 4S is a terrific-looking car. This is marred slightly by the too-sharply falling roof-line, although this has been improved from earlier models by giving it a delightful rear end—which is all that many road users will see of the new Bond.

It is powered by the Triumph Spitfire engine, and the Bond proved itself to be a lively and fairly fast car, reaching just over 92 m.p.h. at its top speed. It would possibly add a few m.p.h. if the headlamps lost their rather deep cowls.

Making full use of the gear box, acceleration is good, but I found that the engine needs to be kept revving quite fast to retain its liveliness, the main punch being delivered at around 3,500 r.p.m. The Bond was easily able to restart on a 1 in 4 test hill, and hand brake held the car on this gradient. Despite using the engine and gear box hard, it was pleasant to find how mean the Bond was over petrol, returning 30 m.p.g. overall. The gear change is fast, smooth and precise, but the ratios are rather too widely spaced. It is possible, however, to fit a stage 2 conversion gear box which has closer and highers speeds in each gear.

The controls are well laid out and most things fall easily to hand. All the switches are clearly marked with symbols for functions. Since the Bond is built in association with Standard Triumph, based on the Herald chassis and using many Triumph parts, it retains the Herald steering assembly except for fitting a delightful wood-rimmed smaller diameter wheel. Unfortunately, the indicator and light controls behind the steering wheel have not been correspondingly shortened, so that it is fairly easy to catch either switch during normal steering movements. Steering and foot controls are offset in different directions, but not awkwardly so.

Tyre pressures on the Bond are quite critical, but with the recommended pressures maintained, handling is excellent.

The tail breaks predictably as the limits of adhesion are reached. High-speed stability is good, although gusty side winds were rather noticeable. The ride is fairly soft and, like the Herald, proves comfortable on most surfaces. Brakes, disc at the front and drum at the rear, were more than adequate, and showed no sign of fade during the test.

The Bond certainly has an air of quality, which is even more apparent inside. The front seats are well shaped and extremely comfortable, with an excellent range of adjustment. Seats in the rear are a little cramped but, nevertheless, they are still pretty comfortable.

The trim and interior finish is very good. Safety features include a collapsible steering column which is also adjustable for length, and a dashboard structure behind the polished wood facia that will collapse under severe impact. Provision is also made for fitting safety belts.

The fibre-glass body is well finished and the whole structure was rattle-free except on very bad surfaces. The boot is extremely roomy, and happily the lid has an automatic stay. Luggage would need to be removed to get at the spare wheel, which lies under the floor.

Altogether, it is a splendid little car, well made and with original equipment that included twin headlamps and flasher, built-in reversing lamps, heater, a generous supply of polished walnut, and that intangible something that makes everyone stop and look at it when it is parked. Perhaps a little expensive at £829, but it *is* largely hand-built.

Since Triumph components are mainly used and the Bond is sold through Triumph agents, spares and service should be no problem. For those who require any improvement in performance, the Spitfire range of performance equipment and tuning are available for the Bond.

Keith Fletcher

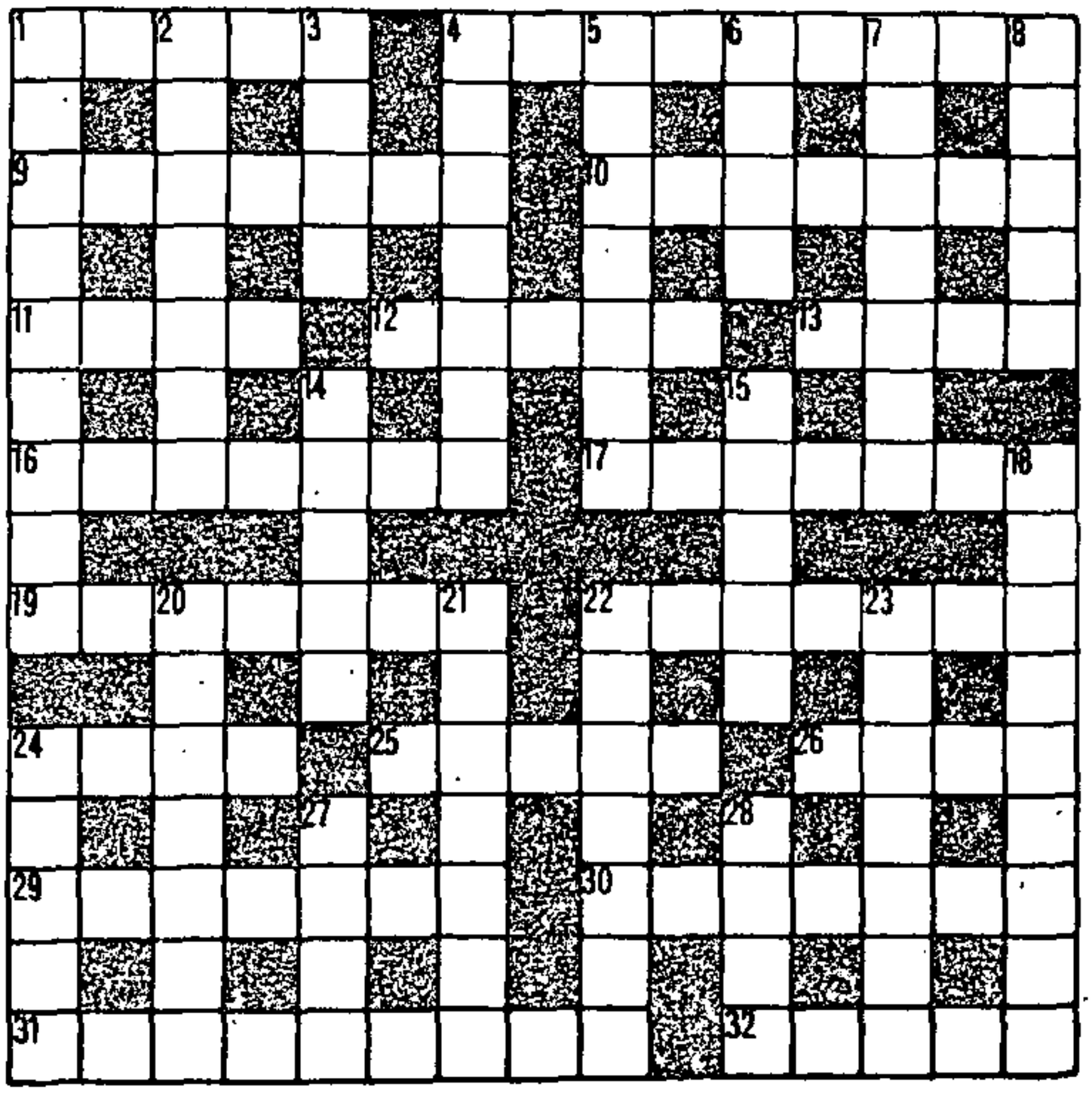
SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD (SEPTEMBER ISSUE)

Across. 1, *Allegiance.* 6, *Stet.* 10, *Tempo.* 11, *Darwinism,* 12, *Bulletin.* 13, *Lotus.* 15, *Tripper.* 17, *Chamber.* 19, *Eyelids.* 21, *Hostage.* 22, *Tenet.* 24, *Mameluke.* 27, *Recondite.* 28. *Awake.* 29, *Byes.* 30, *Newfangled.*

Down. 1, *Acts.* 2, *Limousine.* 3, *Ghoul.* 4, *Auditor.* 5, *Chronic.* 7, *Twist.* 8, *Time-server.* 9, *Misleads.* 14, *Street Arab.* 16, *Printing.* 18, *Blackmail.* 20, *Samnite.* 21, *Himself.* 23, *Niche.* 25, *Learn.* 26, *Lead.*

ARGOSY CROSSWORD

Solution next month



ACROSS

1 For sleeping, by the way (5).

4 "Sport with —— in the shade" (Milton) (9).

9 Stopped talking to help at the sink? (5, 2).

10 There may be something said for breaking it! (7).

11 Platoon out of ammunition (4).

12 Inapt use of colour (5).

13 It may be golden or just being stingy! (4).

16 Raiment changed in a mosque (7).

17 I sing outside at one in wine! (7).

19 Disturbances — in court! (7).

22 Homely tongue? (7).

24 Broadcast each spring (4).

25 Place of 4's retirement? (5).

26 He gets it done! (4).

29 Count Zeppelin invented one (7).

30 A gentle turn is so graceful (7).

31 What's in store for the army? (9).

32 Young bullock (5).

DOWN

1 The height of—madness? (9).

2 Teaching in a woman's faculty! (7).

3 This bird isn't! (4).

4 Snake crippled on hard surface? (7).

5 Races in for the kill? (7).

6 American students' cry (4).

7 Magic lamp (7).

8 Sneak in with dagger (5).

14 Many stagger with large basket (5).

15 Pest (5).

18 He succeeds without really trying? (9).

20 Shows rank in the services (7).

21 Zodiacal sign (7).

22 Novel in Gaza (7).

23 Era of cruelty (4, 3).

24 Hardly a bee-line! (5).

27 French cat (4).

28 Old cape (4).

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The broadcast by the BBC entitled "Can I Learn to be a Writer?" was based on interviews with the senior coach of the London School of Journalism and some of our successful students who spoke of the help they had received in attaining their success.

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Further tributes to the LSJ were broadcast last year on January 28th, March 1st and October 20th.

A warning was given about the doubtful value of the claims made by certain schools. If you seek our advice, you will not be lured by lavish promises or bombarded with letters urging enrolment upon you. If you decide to become a member, you will work under a personal coach and your work will be fully criticised and returned promptly . . . no waiting for weeks or even months.

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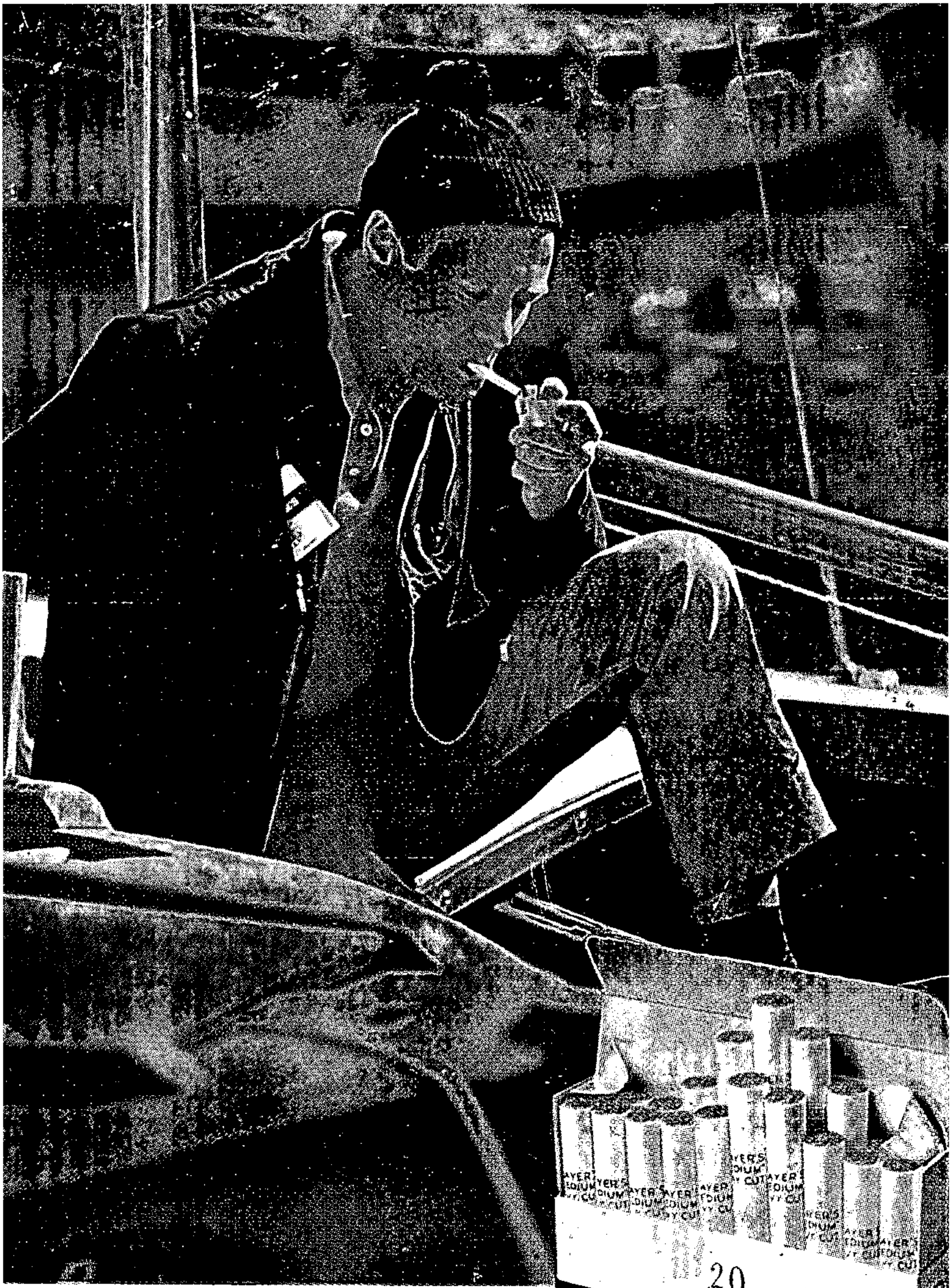

What makes you choose a particular brand of cigarette?

When you put pleasure first, you find that of all cigarettes only Player's please so much